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THE
DUKE OF CLARENCE.

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AN HISTORICAL NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY

E. M. F.
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VOL. I.

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AN HISTORICAL NOVEL

IN THREE VOLUMES

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R. M. S.

VOL. I.



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DUKE OF CLARENCE.

CHAP. I.

IN the year 1422, about a twelvemonth after the decease of our fifth Henry, of warlike fame; a worthy baron, Reginald-de Clifford by name, deeply affected with the death of a monarch, whose person he loved, and under whose banners he had ever fought, with repeated success, during his long and frequent wars in France, determined to abandon a court, where every object recalled to

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his remembrance the bright ornament it had lost; and, with his amiable consort, and infant daughter, to retire to an ancient castle he had, in the northern part of Wales.

For this purpose, he communicated his wishes, and intentions, to the Lady de Clifford; observing that, in retirement, they could pay more attention to the education of their Elfrida, than amidst the vanities of a court.

His lady, who knew no wish, beyond the desire of pleasing her beloved lord, readily assented to the proposal.

“ Elfrida,” (said the Baron, taking his little daughter in his arms) “ Will you not one day, by your conduct, repay your mother the sacrifice she now makes you, in leaving a court, in which she shines the brightest ornament, for your advantage?”

The baroness smiled, whilst tears of tenderness and love sparkled in her eye. She

took the little Elfrida from the baron, and pressed her to her bosom. "If," cried she, "my lord, our Elfrida prove but worthy of the cares we bestow on her; her happy mother will doubly be repaid. With what delight shall we not watch the unfoldings of her tender and youthful mind; and behold, with transport, her infant graces, which promise future charms! Who," (continued she, pressing her to her breast) "possessing such a treasure, would repine at forsaking the vain and trifling pleasures of a court, which yield no lasting joys?"

Whilst the Baron and his lady were thus caressing their lovely child, their attention was called to a youth, of about five years of age, who stood sobbing in one corner of the room.

The Baron called to him:—The boy flew to his arms. "Why weeps my Edgar?" (said the Baron, tenderly embracing him) "What thus afflicts my son?" "Ah, my
B 2 lord,"

lord," cried the boy, "how happy is Lady Elfrida, to what-I am! She has parents, who dearly love her; but poor Edgar has no one left, to love him now, besides old Philip!" So saying, he wept bitterly. "You have, my child," said the Baron, much affected with his distress: "Lady de Clifford and I will love you, as much as we do our Elfrida, if you continue good; and you shall be our son." "And shall lady Elfrida be my sister?" inquired Edgar eagerly. "She shall, my Love." Edgar, delighted, and drying up his tears, put his arms around the little girl's neck; (who was between two and three years of age) affectionately kissed her; calling her repeatedly, his "Dear dear little sister." Elfrida, though she could scarcely speak, seemed much delighted with her companion; and returned his endearments with equal affection.

"What an engaging child this Edgar is, my lord!" said the Baroness. "Who can see him, without being interested in his favor!"

vor! What pleasures these children will afford us, in our retirement!"

The boy now had climbed the knees of the Baron; and, looking earnestly in his face; "But will you, my lord, make me a great general, when I am a man; and let me go to the wars, as my father always promised me I should? and Philip tells me, all young gentlemen should go to the wars to fight, that they may learn how to be great soldiers, as my father was." The Baron smiled, and granted his request. "But, my Edgar," said his lordship, "There is a great deal to learn, before you are fit for the wars; however, if you take your learning well, I will provide you with proper masters, who shall instruct you, how to deserve what you so much wish to become." The baron, then dismissed the children, and consulted with his lady, on the preparations, necessary for their intended journey.

Reginald Baron de Clifford, the last male heir of that name, was the only son of his father. The old lord had, besides him, a daughter, the lady Julia, whom he early married to the Earl of Mortagne; but who died, soon after her union with that nobleman, leaving him one son and daughter. The old Baron survived her but a short time; and his son, soon after his death, served in the wars under Henry the fifth, and acquired much glory and renown, for the greatness of his courage, and valor in battle, and gained the favor and confidence of his sovereign.

After the reconciliation had taken place between England and France, and Henry returned in triumph with his beauteous bride; the young lord paid his addresses to a beautiful and amiable young lady, of high rank and fortune; who, after some time spent in courtship, approved his suit, and consented to make him happy. Their marriage was soon after solemnized, with the greatest splendor and magnificence; Henry and his lovely
Catharine

Catharine gracing it by their presence, in compliment to their favorite the Baron.

The Lord de Clifford, however happy in the possession of a young and charming bride, neglected not the calls of honor. His arm was ever raised in the service of his country, whenever it required its aid. His lady brought him several children; none of which, to their infinite grief and mortification, survived, except the lady Elfrida; who had now attained her second year.

The Baron, in his youth, had contracted a friendship with a brave knight, named Philip de Montford; who, dying in battle, besought his friend, to protect his only child, a boy of about five years of age. The Baron accepted the trust, and promised the dying knight, he would consider him as his own. This promise softened the pangs of death in the knight; and soon after, his departing spirit forlook its earthly habitation, to answer its last great account.

Sir Philip de Montford had been wild, and expensive, in his youth; and several of his debts were left unpaid. As Edgar was only a natural child, his estates were obliged to be sold: and the sum, arising from the disposal of them, after the payment of Sir Philip's debts, was, though very inconsiderable, the whole of the youth's patrimony. The good Baron, therefore, determined not to touch Edgar's little fortune; but to educate him entirely at his own expence; and that in a manner, befitting one of the highest rank.

The time, proposed by his lordship, for the removal of himself and family into Wales, now arrived: when, taking leave of his brother-in-law, the Lord Mortagne, (between whom and himself never any great intimacy had subsisted) he departed for de Clifford castle.

De Clifford, which was down in the northern part of Wales, was situated rather upon

an

an eminence. This ancient mansion was famed, in those parts, for the valor, hospitality, and munificence, of all its possessors.

It was admired by all who saw it, for the beauty and grandeur of its architecture. The hand of time was visible on it; and, by being exposed, on one side, to the chill blast of the northern wind, that rudely rushed through those apartments, which graced its front, part of its beauties were defaced; but, by the cares of the present possessor, it still retained, notwithstanding these blemishes, no small share of its former magnificence: while those parts which had mouldered under the heavy hand of time, served only to give it a kind of awful and solemn grandeur.

To the southward, it commanded a view of the mountains, and of the Severn. A fine and noble park was extended near its front; which led, on the left side, to a grove of tall elms, whose high towering tops, from being left to nature, had embraced and mingled

with each other's branches. On one side, the Mansia ran along; and the frequent breaks or openings, left by the trees, gave a beautiful view of the river.

The rooks, undisturbed by invaders, seemed to consider this grove, as their peculiar property; and had taken possession of all the trees, by which it was formed. A rude stone bridge crossed the river; and lengthened the walk to a considerable extent.

This grove, from the solemn gloom that reigned through it, and from the darkness, occasioned by the trees overshadowing its whole space, was regarded with fear and dread, by the servants, and by the inhabitants of the place around.

Tales of spirits and apparitions, whose solemn office, 'twas said, was to guard it, were circulated, and believed, by the whole country; and few were hardy enough, to venture into it, after the setting of the sun.

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The Baron and his lady lived at their castle, in a manner befitting their fortunes, and becoming their high birth; and never did the weary traveller leave de Clifford castle, without bestowing a blessing on the noble inhabitants. They regretted not, amidst the pleasures arising from diffusing happiness around them, the vain unmeaning pomp of courts.

Elfrida, though young, promised to be extremely beautiful. Her temper was mild, and gentle; accompanied with a quickness of sensibility, which was never so much alarmed, as when any reflection was cast upon Edgar: a circumstance that never failed to call forth her resentment, or her tears.

Edgar, who was now about nine or ten years of age, took his learning, with a surprising facility; and the baron, who spared no expence in his education, was repaid by the readiness with which he comprehended every thing his masters taught him. He was delighted, also, at the passion he shewed

for arms and chivalry ; as it was his lordship's chief amusement in his youth ; and, having no son of his own, he was desirous, that Edgar should become an adept in that noble science. Early, therefore, he was taught to bend the bow, and to bear the massy shield.

Edgar was of a warm temper ; yet so restrained, that it was scarcely discoverable, but when defending the cause of innocence oppressed, or being himself unjustly charged. He was open, generous, and unsuspecting ; gentle, and engaging in his manners ; and, by the goodness of his disposition ; his extreme gratitude to his benefactors, whom he loved as his parents ; by his affable and courteous deportment to his inferiors ; he became the darling, not only of the Baron and his lady, but of the whole family, and neighbourhood.

These amiable children loved each other, with the affection of brother and sister ; each partook in the joys, and little grievances, which the other felt.

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The baron, and his lady, encouraged their mutual fondness. Indeed, they scarcely loved their Elfrida more, than they did Edgar. Oft, whilst the Baron and Baronesse would, with their children, ramble amidst the walks of the castle, planning future schemes for the happiness of their child, and looking up with gratitude to heaven; for having left them one blessing in their old age, Edgar would contrive to lead Elfrida some distance from them; sometimes shewing her some new and favorite walk, he had found out; making her seats, when she was wearied, or plucking her the choicest fruits of the garden; never being more elated, or proud, than when permitted to have the charge of *her*.

Edgar took great delight in hearing the histories and achievements of great warriors. To these he would listen, with the most unfeigned attention; and, whilst the baron would fight over the battles of his youth, his countenance would become animated; his young heart would beat high, with youthful ardor
and

and impatience, to become an actor in those scenes of glory! whilst the Baronefs, with eyes filled with love, and female softnefs, would shudder at the dangers, her lord had encountered; and, preffing to her maternal bofom the young Elfrida, would inwardly rejoice, that her fex exempted her from fuch dangers.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE happiness, which had so long reigned undisturbed at the Castle, was, however, suddenly turned into mourning, by the death of the lady de Clifford; and the Baron was left overwhelmed with grief and affliction.

Time, however, which softens every misfortune, meliorated the Baron's first excess of grief, into a lasting and tender remembrance of his departed lady. His love, also, for the lovely pledge she left behind of their affection, (and who doubly now demanded his utmost
attention

attention and care) prevented his sinking under so severe a blow; and, by the wholesome counsels and remonstrances of a good father, who lived with him, as confessor to his family, and tutor to Edgar, he was enabled to bear it with tolerable fortitude.

Father Anthony (for such was this spiritual person's name) was a general favorite in the family of the Baron, for the goodness of his heart, and simplicity of his manners. He was uncommonly learned, for those times; and free from that pride, which was the characteristic of the clergy, in those days: had no monastic or illiberal prejudices; but was meek and gentle in his manners; and was, indeed, a faithful disciple of his great master, whose commands he truly followed. Such was Father Anthony: and a cold or stern look from him was the severest of all punishments, in the house of de Clifford; as none ever met with it, but those who really deserved it.

By

By him Edgar was taught the noblest of sciences, that of Ethics; and he soon became sensible of the vanity of placing his happiness on mundane enjoyments. His youthful bosom now panted as eagerly, to be employed in acts of beneficence, as to tread in the paths that lead to martial fame.

The pleasing cares of Elfrida's and Edgar's improvements, and the concern the good Baron took in the affairs of his tenants, and dependants, occupied his mind, and prevented him from dwelling too much on the loss of his beloved partner and friend.

Oft, when employed in giving advice, and preparing the mind of Elfrida for her future conduct, when she would enter the world, and death deprive her of his protecting care, he would fancy the spirit of his departed lady looked down, with mild approbation, on his labors. And, while beholding the uncommon charms, which now shone forth in Elfrida, (and which became the admiration

miration of the whole neighbourhood) with parental exultation and delight, whilst they reminded him of his once blooming Ella, when she first made him happy by consenting to become his bride; he would put up a prayer to heaven, that, as it had been pleased to make her as lovely as her mother, it might also render her as amiable.

Oft times Edgar would relate to the Baron Elfrida's care of a sick peasant, or the wretched or miserable, that craved her assistance; and how much she was adored by all the villagers, for her tenderness and humanity. The delighted Baron, then, would press the image of his departed Ella, with transport to his breast, and would look up with gratitude to heaven, for having granted his prayer.

The Baron would often attend Edgar, whilst he was performing his exercises, with his masters. Lady Elfrida would sometimes be a spectator, also, with her father; and join in the encomiums, the Baron bestowed
on

on him, for the neatness and agility, with which he performed the different manœuvres, both on horseback and on foot. He excelled, also, in the use of the bow; and managed his horse, with peculiar grace and skill. His lordship had presented him with a very fine charger, which was extremely wild, and vicious; and Edgar, in imitation of Alexander, had named him Bucephalus; and was very proud of the present.

De Montford was handsome, without being effeminate. Indeed, of his bravery he had given several convincing proofs, even during his childhood; and, though gentle in his temper, and manners, he possessed a high and a noble spirit.

The praises which were continually bestowed upon him, gave Elfrida the most unfeigned delight; and, when retired with her favorite attendant, she was always drawing comparisons between that youth, and the young nobleman who visited her father's castle,

tle. These generally terminated in favor of the former.

Edgar now threw aside, as Elfrida grew up, that childish familiarity, with which he was wont to treat her; and assumed a more distant manner, though accompanied with the sincerest friendship and affection. The Baron, when Elfrida had attained her fifteenth year, committed the management of his family to her care; in which, by her attention and address, she more than answered his greatest expectations.

The Baron had lately received letters from France, importing the expected return of a dear and valued friend of his, the noble Lord of Salisbury. This nobleman, under whose protection his lordship intended, that Edgar should be placed, was, at the time of the Baron's retiring from court, appointed, by John Duke of Bedford, Regent of France, to the government of Champagne. He was now shortly expected to return to England,

to raise a reinforcement of troops, for the relief of that Prince.

“ My Edgar,” (said the Baron, withdrawing with the youth to his study) “ soon will the time arrive, when England will demand thy services. Soon will the glorious opportunity arrive that will call forth my Edgar’s courage, in the service of his Monarch: and that martial flame, which burns in that youthful breast, shall animate thy arm against the Dauphin, who unjustly disputes the young Henry’s claim to the crown of France, won by his warlike father.

In parting with thee, my son, I shall feel the struggles of a fond parent, willing and anxious, that his son should tread in the paths of glory; yet who dreads the parting, from the ties of paternal affection! But to God’s good providence, and the goodness of his own heart, I must soon commit, as the only guides, my beloved Edgar. O my son, return to me your father, with those principles
of

of rectitude, you leave me with; and open shall these arms be to receive you, though vanquished and overcome!"

The eyes of the Baron, as he said this, were filled with tender sorrow. Edgar, too much affected to trust his voice, kneeling, seized the hand of the Baron, and pressed it to his breast, in silence. His heart was full. Tender regret, and ambition, raised a conflict in his bosom. He was unwilling the Baron should see, how much the thought of leaving the Castle pained him, when in so glorious a cause; and, perceiving his tender feelings to increase, he left the room, ashamed of his emotion.

In seeking his chamber, he had to cross the great hall, which was ornamented with the arms, and trophies, belonging to the house of de Clifford. The sword of the Baron attracted his notice. He took it from the place where it hung, and drew it from the scabbard. His heart beat high; the co-
our

lour suffused his cheeks; his eyes sparkled; his whole face glowed with fire; and, for a moment, glory alone possessed his breast! The Baron entered. Edgar, in some confusion, sheathed the sword. His lordship smiled—"You shall try it, one of these days, de Montford," said the Baron.—"It has done good service to its country: and, though this withered arm refuses longer to wield it, yet, in the hands of Edgar, I trust, it will not lose its wonted force. Take it, my son; but remember, never let the sword of de Clifford be drawn in an unworthy cause." "I receive it, my lord," (said the youth, bending one knee to the ground) "as the most sacred trust; and though, in the hand of Edgar, it may lose its wonted valor; yet, believe me, your Edgar never will disgrace or tarnish the lustre of its former glory. O may the gallant spirit of my benefactor, whilst I draw it, animate my arm! and may the remembrance of his great actions, while they fill me with admiration, make me emulate his glory!"

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The Baron was affected: he raised the youth, and embraced him with emotion. "I doubt not, my Edgar: he will, I am convinced, add fresh laurels to it. Son of a gallant fire, son of my heart," continued he, "how does the promise I made your dying father, to consider you as my child, (and which, as much as in my power, I have fulfilled) now repay me, by your noble emulation! It repays me a hundred fold! I feel, I feel thou art, indeed, my son! would thou couldst be—" He paused—"But it cannot be!" An universal trembling seized the frame of Edgar.—His countenance turned pale as death; and, disengaging himself from the arms of the Baron, he hastily left the hall.

CHAP. III.

SOME months had elapsed; when the young Marquis of Stafford, son and heir to the Duke of Leinster, spent a day and night at the Castle. The young lord paid great attention to the lady Elfrida; who was, about this period of time, seventeen years of age, and possessed a form and face, beautiful beyond description.

The Marquis, in very high terms, expressed his admiration at her uncommon beauty, and accomplishments. He particularly

cularly admired her painting, and drawings; in which art she far excelled most of her sex. Her father desired her to play on the lute. Elfrida immediately complied; and played an air, to which de Montford had composed some words. The young lord happened to find fault, and to ridicule some part of the verses, without knowing who was their author. Edgar smiled; but Elfrida was, in her heart, very much displeased; and, notwithstanding the entreaties of the Marquis, soon after laid down the instrument, pretending she was hoarse, and could not sing.

At night, when Ellen, her favorite attendant, was undressing her, and her other woman had withdrawn, Ellen began, in the following manner: "And, pray your ladyship, how are you pleased with the young lord of Stafford? Mr. William, the Butler, told me, the young lord seems very much in love with your ladyship." "I see nothing," replied Elfrida, "particularly to admire in him. He is very well, as to person; but is

too bold, and presuming in his manners.— Why should William fancy him attached to me, as he never saw me, above twice before; and then I was a mere child? And I am sure,” continued she, “ I should be very sorry, should he feel other sentiments than those of friendship for me.” “ Mr. William,” returned Ellen, “ says, the Marquis never took his eyes off your ladyship, during the dinner; and that he overheard him talk to his valet about you. That he swore you was an angel; that it would be a charity to prevent your being buried alive here; and that, if he were to take your ladyship to court, all the ladies would die with envy.” “ I think,” said Elfrida, “ his talking of me to his man, was making very free with me; but this I can assure him, I would rather infinitely live here, all my days, than ever visit the world, as his wife.” “ Indeed,” replied Ellen, “ to my mind, there is no comparison between him and our Mr. Edgar; as Mr. William said to me, the other day, when the young gentlemen were walking together

across the park : but your ladyship will be angry at his boldness, were I to tell you."

"Why, what did William say, Ellen?—William is a good servant, and was always a great favorite of mine; and, I am sure, would not say any thing that could offend me." "Since your ladyship commands me, I will tell you."

"Says he," 'Ellen, what a pity it is, Mr. Edgar has not the fortunes of the Marquis? What a fine noble young gentleman he is! He is worth twenty such as the Marquis.—See with what an air of dignity he walks! How like the portrait of the Duke of Clarence, which hangs in the picture-gallery! I often think almost it was drawn for him.—Oh! Ellen,' "cried he," 'Your young lady and Mr. de Montford were surely born for each other, though fortune has for ever separated them.'

During this speech, the countenance of Elfrida underwent a variety of changes. She
alternately

alternately turned pale and red : but, striving to conceal the emotion she felt;—" I think, indeed, Ellen, as William observes, there is some resemblance between that portrait and Mr. de Montford.—I have been often struck with the likeness myself.—But remember, you never mention this conversation being told me." " I promise your ladyship, I never will," replied Ellen; " and, if I thought it would have given your ladyship the least offence, or made you angry with Mr. William, I would sooner have cut my tongue out, than have dropped a syllable of the matter." " I am not angry, Ellen," said Elfrida, mildly; " only you know, if my father should happen to hear, that William had said what he did, he might be displeased."

" If my lord were to be offended at that, my lady, he would be angry with all his servants; for they all say the same thing: and, to my mind, there is ne'er a one of the young lords, who visit the Castle, that comes up to him. And then he is so good-humoured;

so generous, and affable; he never gives a poor servant a cross or uncivil word. And, as to old Philip, his Man, he perfectly dotes on him. He is for ever praying for the time to come, when his master is to go to these French wars; for then, he says, Mr. Edgar will certainly be made a great Knight, because he is so brave and courageous: and then he is to be his 'Squire, I think, he says; which his master promised him he should be, whenever he is made one. And I understand, my lady, from Philip, that we are soon to lose him. Well, for my part, I think, Mr. Edgar had much better stay with his friends, at the Castle, than go to these foreign parts."

"Did Philip say," (interrupted Elfrida hastily) "that his master had told him, he intended shortly to leave the Castle? I never heard my father mention it; and I am sure, Mr. de Montford would first have told my lord, if such were his intentions."

"Mr.

“ Mr. Philip only said, my lady,” replied Ellen, that his master frequently talked about his leaving the Castle, and going to France ; but I did not hear him say, he had fixed any particular time ; only that he said, it would be very soon.”

Elfrida now told her woman, that she might leave her ; which she accordingly did ; and in rather an uneasy state of mind, from the intelligence she had communicated to her, respecting de Montford's departure. She felt hurt, that he should sooner communicate his intentions to his servant, than to her ; and, altogether, passed the most uneasy restless night, she had ever experienced.

At breakfast, the next morning, Elfrida received the civilities and attentions of the Marquis, with as much coldness and indifference as she could assume, without rudeness ; and felt extremely happy, when he rose to take leave ; which he did soon after, with many expressions of sorrow, that it was not

in his power to make a longer stay at the Castle.

After he was gone, Elfrida went to her different studies, which employed her time, till a little before the dinner hour; which time she filled up, by going to the gallery of pictures. And, upon looking on that one mentioned by Ellen, she was much struck with the resemblance it bore of de Montford.

As she stood contemplating the portrait, she was joined by Edgar, who had, for some-time, unperceived observed her; and, turning to her smiling, said; "Whose portrait, lady Elfrida has been happy enough, to engage your attention so long?" She blushed; but, hiding her confusion, replied, with a careless indifferent air, "I have just found out a likeness for you, Edgar. This picture of the Duke of Clarence strongly resembles you. Do you not observe the likeness yourself? It is obvious to me." "I do,

do, lady Elfrida ; but never thought the resemblance it bears, half so strong as now."

"Your servant, Sir," cried Elfrida ;
"What a gallant man you are grown of late !
but I think, Mr. Montford, (continued she
gravely) "by parting with your usual frank-
ness, for such extreme politeness, you have
not profited by the change." "What does
your ladyship allude to ?" cried Edgar, asto-
nished and perplexed ; "do, for heaven's
sake, relieve my anxiety, and let me know.
Tell me in what manner I have offended
you."—"I did not say, Mr. de Montford,
you had offended me. I have no right to
censure or condemn your actions ; as a friend,
interested in your concerns, I might feel
hurt, at your withholding your usual confi-
dence from me." "Lady Elfrida is pleased
to deal in mysteries," returned de Montford ;
"for I call all the Saints in Heaven to wit-
ness, I know not what you mean. Do, dear-
est Elfrida, tell me my offence ; as you know

not what I suffer, even for one moment, being under your displeasure !”

“ It seems then, Edgar,” (replied Elfrida, deeply blushing, and looking down) “ I was not thought worthy to be entrusted with your determination of soon quitting the Castle !” “ My intentions of soon quitting the Castle !” cried he, astonished ; “ Who has given your ladyship this information ?” “ Ellen had it from Philip.” “ Ah ! I can explain that immediately,” replied de Montford, his countenance brightening up. “ Philip has, for sometime past, been teasing me, to let him accompany me, when I should join the wars in France ; and, if ever, I am made a Knight, to let him be my ’Squire : which I, to get rid of his importunity, promised he should, whenever that happened. The other day, he was questioning me, when I meant to leave the Castle—I returned for answer, that the Baron intended I should return to France with my Lord of Salisbury : which might be shortly, as he was daily expected in England.

Your

Your father, I had supposed, Madam, had acquainted you with this circumstance; or I should.—But, in truth, my leaving the Castle excites too many painful ideas, to make it a pleasurable subject.”

“And now, dearest lady Elfrida, am I still culpable in your eyes? If I am, I shall still think myself guilty. Have I cleared myself of disengenuousness?” As he said this, he took her hand; his fine countenance glowing with a peculiar expression of earnestness.

“Certainly you have de Montford.” “And will lady Elfrida give me her hand, in token of her forgiveness, for this voluntary omission?” Elfrida blushed, but forbade him not; which he construing as a permission, pressed it with ardor to his lips. “And does my father,” cried Elfrida, with emotion, “intend your going so soon? But I suppose, Sir, it is your wish.” “Ah! Lady Elfrida,” replied Edgar mournfully, “Whatever flat-

tering ideas my ambition may conjure up to my imagination, in pursuing the path of glory; inspired too by your father's great example; by treading in those paths, my ancestors have trod before me; and by not ingloriously serving, in my country's cause, to wipe off the stigma, which now stamps my birth with infamy; how do they all sink, and vanish into grief and despondency, at the thought of leaving the Castle; of leaving all I hold most dear on earth!"

Tears forced their way to his eyes; he paused; and still held the hand of Elfrida, as if unwilling to relinquish it. She trembled from head to foot; and, had not the entrance of one of the domestics, to inform them dinner waited, fortunately relieved her, her agitation would have been too visible, longer to have escaped his notice.

CHAP. IV.

IN the same gallery, hung the picture of the Lady Júlia, the sister of the Baron; and immediately opposite, was placed that of a young man, of noble and commanding presence.

“Poor Julia,” (said the Baron one day, after having for some time observed the portrait) “Thy fate was a hard one.” As he said this, he sighed deeply; and the tears started to his eyes. It affected Elfrida. “Was my Aunt Julia unhappy, my lord?” inquired she. “Do not ask me of her my love; the question pains me: I would wish to forget,
I had

I had the loveliest of Sisters, and the most amiable of Friends. But memory will be busy, and recall their beloved forms to my mind.—Ah Montcalm!—Best, and dearest of friends; I fear, thou wast not—Yet, if I thought,”—As the Baron pronounced these disjointed sentences, he arose in visible disorder: his eyes struck fire; and his whole frame became agitated! Then suddenly, as if recollecting himself, he returned to the seat he had quitted, saying, “Let me forbear reflections.—Reflections, which, perhaps, may fall on the guiltless.”

As he said this, he grew more composed; and turning to his daughter, who had beheld his emotion, in silent wonder and concern;—“Hear me, my Child,” cried he; “thy question has aroused too many painful images, for silence to quiet them.—I will tell thee some few anecdotes of thy family; to which, as yet, thou art a stranger. My heart, also, is by much too full, for other subjects. I had a friend, in the early part of my youth; whom.

whom I loved the best on earth : and a sister, one of nature's fairest flowers : in form and face, she was a pattern to her sex ; but the graces of her mind, if possible, outshone those of her person. The cruel policy of thy grand-father divided those, whom Heaven intended for each other. I would relate their sufferings ; but it would reflect dishonor on their author. He was my father ; neither would I reflect upon the dead.—Severely, in the end, did he feel his cruelty to his child.

My Sister, you well know, married the Earl of Mortagne ; a man infinitely older than herself ; and in every respect inferior (but in birth and fortune) to the man, whom her own wishes, as well as mine, pointed out to her, as a husband.

The marriage had been solemnized, during the absence of Montcalm ; and alas ! deceptions had been practised, or she never would have wedded, after having been affianced to my friend. I pass over the deep distress of
her

her lover, on finding, at his return, the object of his fondest wishes, lost, perhaps, for ever to him.—My affliction was scarce less than his own.

My Sister tried to forget, she ever loved another, in the duty she felt for her lord.—I would have had her seen him; hoping it might sooth the deep dejection, that had taken possession of his mind. But she was inexorably firm in her duty. In vain I painted his sufferings; and, that to see him, was the only reparation, now, within her power, to make to a man, whom she had been the fatal cause of rendering, most probably, for ever unhappy.

She heard my arguments, and reproaches, with patient mildness; but they availed me not; and I left her in anger. It was the last hour I saw her. Oh! Julia, my Sister, thy angelic mildness forgave the reproaches, and bitter upbraiding of thy cruel Brother! At a time, too, when thy heart was torn by love,
and

and duty !” ‘ Do not, do not, my Reginald,’ (cried the faint-like sufferer once, in answer to my cruelty, whilst the tears ran down her beauteous cheeks) “ Do not, my Brother, kill me, by your reproaches. — They stab me to the heart; yet will never move me from the duty I owe my lord !” “ Sweet suffering excellence, I should have soothed the anguish of her heart, when she knew she had been deceived, and for ever deprived of happiness. — I should have applauded the firmness, with which she rejected the importunities, the entreaties of a lover, and a brother.”

“ I soon after left the kingdom; and my friend returned to Scotland, his native country, to take possession of some estates, bequeathed to him there. On my return—Oh! grief to tell! my Julia, my Montcalm, both were dead! The former died, in consequence of a miscarriage; and of my friend I heard but confused accounts. The general report which prevailed was, that he had been robbed, and murdered, on his way to Scotland.”

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The Baron arose, and laid his hand upon his breast, with an air of resignation to the will of Heaven. "I once was warm, and impetuous, in my temper; but these events have softened my heart, and turned it from the vanity of building my happiness, on mundane enjoyments. Thy mother, too, and an offspring, beautiful as day, were taken from me. Whom—but thou, my Child, art left de Clifford!" Elfrida, at these words flew to his arms; and the Baron presently forgot his sorrows.

CHAP. V.

A SHORT time after this, as the Baron, Elfrida and Edgar, were returning from a neighbouring visit, which they had been

been paying, at some distance from the Castle, the horse, on which the Baron was mounted, took fright at something on the road, and threw him.

Elfrida, seeing the danger of her father, fainted. Upon which, Edgar, with a rapidity scarce less than lightning, threw himself from his fiery charger; and, at the hazard of his own life, saved Elfrida from falling, as she was sinking lifeless from her horse, at the instant he arrived.

Taking her in his arms, he placed her in safety: then, leaving her, he sought the Baron; whom he found, lying at a small distance, supported by his servant. His lordship complained not of having sustained any injury, from his fall; but seemed much stunned. Upon seeing Edgar, he eagerly inquired after Elfrida; and was assured of her safety, by him. De Montford, being satisfied respecting the Baron, returned to Elfrida; whom he still found insensible. Fortunately,
there

there was a rivulet, close by the spot ; and, procuring some water in his hat, she quickly revived, from its effects.

Upon coming to her senses, she recollected the accident which had happened ; and, though assured of the safety of her father, insisted on being taken to him. Edgar complied with her desire ; and led her to the Baron. She embraced him with transport ; and, kneeling, thanked heaven, for having preserved so precious an existence. Then, turning to de Montford ; “ I have not yet thanked my preserver ; without whose timely assistance, my lord,” said she, addressing her father, “ you would have lost your child.”

The Baron, embracing the youth, poured forth the most grateful commendations on him, for the preservation of Elfrida. Edgar was overwhelmed with confusion, at the praises and thanks bestowed, for doing, what he averred his duty : declaring, that he considered his patron’s life, on every occasion,

as

as his own; and felt highly indebted to providence, for having made him an humble instrument, in preserving such a treasure, as lady Elfrida.

The party now proceeded towards the Castle; the Baron leaning on his servant, whilst Elfrida put her arm through that of Edgar.

When they had reached the Castle, the servants were all alarmed at the pale looks of their lord, and young lady; and also at their being without their horses. All at once, therefore, they were making inquiries, with concern, and anxiety, painted on their countenances. The Baron satisfied them, that they had received no injury; and desired the servant to relate to them the accident: which, when they had heard, they thanked God, for having preserved their lord from such danger; and loaded Edgar with thanks and praises, for his care of their young lady. And all agreed, Heaven would reward him for it.

They

They then quitted the room; and some of the men went in search of the horses, who had been left to themselves. They, however, were soon caught, and brought back. Elfrida, immediately after supper, retired to her chamber; complaining she was fatigued with what had passed.

As soon as she entered the room, Ellen began to sing forth the praises of de Montford. "Dear me, my lady," said she, "to think the danger your ladyship has been in! our Robert says, you would most certainly have been killed, but for Mr. Edgar; who threw himself, at the hazard of his own life, from that vicious animal, Bucephalus; who took fright at my lord's fall, and was rearing, and prancing, at the time! I am sure, I shall always love him for it, as long as I live." "I did not know," cried Elfrida, with emotion, "that he had endangered his life, to preserve mine."

Elfrida now, for the first time, began to perceive, that a more tender sensation had
taken

taken place in her bosom, than that of friendship, for de Montford. His having saved her life, at the risk of his own, filled her with the most grateful emotions : and, whilst she admired his bravery, she shuddered at the danger, he had encountered for her sake.

Upon the departure of Ellen, she gave a loose to reflections, which crowded thick upon her imagination. She began to call herself to a severe account, for the sentiments she entertained for that youth : and, upon a strict examination of the state of her heart, had the mortification to find it irretrievably lost, before she even suspected it endangered ; and without having reason to imagine, it had met with a suitable return.

On this afflicting reflection, she recalled to her remembrance every particular circumstance, and conversation they had ever held together ; to find, also, if she had betrayed her weakness to his observation.—But, upon the severest scrutiny, she could not find, she had

had ever given him reason to suspect the situation of her heart; nor that he had ever evinced other sentiments than those of friendship, and the degree of freedom, that their situation warranted him to treat her with.— Yet, however much she was confounded at the discovery of her own condition, she was not a little comforted in fancying, that she had not betrayed her predilection to de Montford.

She now determined for the future, to avoid being alone with him, whenever she could prevent it, without appearing singular.

In these, and such like determinations, she passed the chief part of the night, till, at last, sleep relieved her from the severity of her self-reproaches.

As the Baron and his family were at dinner, the day following, a messenger arrived, from the Earl of Mortagne, with a letter for his
his

his lordship. He took it, and read it in silence: his countenance, however, indicated, that the contents had given him a pain, which he, in vain, tried to conceal from observation. He answered Elfrida's inquiries, respecting the health of her Uncle, and Cousins, by telling her, they were all well, and expected shortly to have the pleasure of seeing her. Elfrida looked surprised; and Edgar seemed disturbed. "But, you shall see the contents yourself, my love, presently," resumed the Baron.

Elfrida, though she was impatient to know, what the letter contained, yet half dreaded it; as she could not but apprehend, from the concern painted on the countenance of her father, that the contents would cause her pain.

When the cloth was removed, and the servants were withdrawn, the Baron produced the letter. It contained a most pressing invitation to Elfrida, from the Earl, her Un-

cle, to spend some months with his daughter; who was just returned from France, and felt impatient to be acquainted with her Cousin, of whom she had heard great encomiums.

The letter finished with an earnest entreaty to the Baron, not to deny him the pleasure of his Niece's company: which he should consider, when granted, as the greatest mark of his confidence, and esteem. He urged, in forcible terms, the advantage Elfrida would receive, from an introduction to the court: a polish, he added, to an education, which, he observed, from all the accounts he had heard, only required that, to make it complete; passing, at the same time, some compliments on the Baron, for the share he had in it. His lordship, as he finished the letter, looked at Elfrida; and, without giving his opinion, seemed to wait her determination.

However

However reluctant the Baron felt, at the thought of parting with his child, though but for a few months; yet, he could not be insensible to the advantages she would reap, from being introduced to the world, whilst she had yet his counsels to guide her: and, as old age, and increasing infirmities, unfitted him for such a journey; her Uncle was, certainly, the Guardian, proper to be chosen, on such an occasion.

As to Elfrida, when she had heard the contents of her Uncle's letter, she tried, with anxious impatience, to read, in her father's countenance, his opinion, and sentiments, respecting the invitation: whilst Edgar seemed laboring, to stifle the emotion, which arose in his breast, during the reading of the letter, and his impatience to know his lordship's determination. Who, seeing that Elfrida awaited his sentiments, in trembling anxiety, delivered them in the following manner.

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“ You cannot, my dearest child,” said he, “ but be sensible of the extreme reluctance, I must feel, at the thought of parting with you; and, that my chief happiness is in the society of my Elfrida. But, nevertheless, the duty of a parent demands of me, that I should sacrifice so great a pleasure, when the benefit of my Child requires it; however hard may be the struggle, For, who, that sees my Elfrida, but would condemn the parent, whose selfishness would bury such perfection in solitude?—Oblige your Uncle, my love, with giving him your company, for some months.—Him you must look upon, as your future guardian, when death calls me from you: unless, before that period arrive, you have allowed some other, to claim that privilege. Ah! how great would be my pleasure, to see, before death has for ever closed these aged eyes, my Elfrida united to an object, deserving of her love! To know, that the happiness of my Child is deposited in the hands of a lover and protector, who is worthy of such a trust, how calm would be

Be my last hours!—Ah! how few there are, should I not be here, to guide you, when that most important step is taken! And, on that occasion, whenever it shall happen, believe me, Elfrida, I shall lay aside the authority, with which nature has invested me; being well convinced, you would never make an improper choice, nor the Daughter of de Clifford ever give her fond indulgent parent reason to blush for his Child. Be guided, my beloved, by the goodness of your heart, in the merits of him you choose; and by your dignity of birth, in regard to his rank and fortune. These latter, however immaterial and unimportant they may seem, to a youthful imagination, secluded from the world, ought not to be disregarded.—But virtue and true honor are the most essential, and first to be considered.”

“ I am leading from our subject: my concern for your welfare, is my excuse.—Go then, my Child, my best beloved, and in this world, which you soon will visit, select

an object, who unites the qualities I mention, to a birth equal to your own. And to him, whether poor or rich, will I, with pleasure, give my Elfrida, as his bride."

The Baron paused, and looked earnestly in the face of the trembling, and terrified Elfrida; who, not daring to encounter the mild, but penetrating eye of her father, cast her too conscious orbs, in confusion, to the ground.

Edgar arose to leave the room; but his lordship forbade him.—“Do not withdraw, de Montford,” said he; “I have nothing at present to say to Elfrida, but what I would have you hear.” The youth, upon this, bowed, and retired to the window: and the Baron continued: “You do not answer me, my Child; and your countenance proclaims, that your Uncle’s request is unwelcome to you. But you must remember, that he may possibly soon be your only protector; as, according to the ordinary course of nature, I
have

have not many years to count, before death arrests their career. Think then, how little it is your interest to disoblige him."

Elfrida's eyes were suffused with tears, at this speech of her father: which he perceiving, turned to Edgar—"Assist me, de Montford," said he, "in persuading Elfrida to leave us: However unwilling you may feel, at losing her society, you must see it is for her advantage; and, therefore, I expect you will join me."

Edgar coloured, bowed, and essayed to obey the Baron: and, in a low, and scarcely articulate voice, he murmured some concurrence, with the sentiments of his lordship.—But, meeting the eyes of Elfrida, which seemed to convey a kind of reproachful meaning in them, he desisted from saying any thing, that might be disagreeable to her. Elfrida, now feeling herself somewhat recovered, from the alarm her father had given her, began to urge his lordship, not to make

a point of her accepting the Earl's invitation.—“ And, can my father,” (said she, in the accents of entreaty) “ consent to part with his Child, who knows no wish, no desire, superior to that of being with him? Can he consent to expose my unexperienced youth to the dangers of a Court, which he has so often described to me, as being great? No, my father, suffer your daughter to remain in peaceful solitude with you; and do not, by a false concern for her welfare, deprive her of the pleasure of performing the duties of a daughter. Whenever that dreadful period, you hint at, shall arrive, (which may Heaven long avert) my Uncle will not refuse me his protection, because I was unwilling to leave a father, who had a right to expect every attention, a child could bestow.” In finishing these words, she threw herself in her father's arms; and bathed his cheek with tears.

The good old Baron was much affected, with her filial piety and tenderness; and was
some

some time, before he could return her an answer. "I wanted not this proof, my dear," said his lordship, recovering himself, "to convince me of your affection;" as the whole of my Elfrida's life has been one continued example of filial duty and love. But yet, my Child must again give way. The world demands this sacrifice from me; and I submit. May it exceed your expectations!"—When the Baron had finished these words, he hastily left the room, fearful lest his daughter should discover the force he put upon his inclinations, by his emotion, which he could no longer restrain.

Edgar also withdrew, as doubting his resolution, to persuade Elfrida to leave the Castle; and yet too honest, and generous, to say any thing, that might raise an obstacle, to prevent her complying with the wishes of her father.

Elfrida, though much she wished to speak on the subject to Edgar, yet would not call

him back. Sending, therefore, for Ellen, she retired to her apartment; where, throwing herself upon the couch, she burst into tears! Ellen, who was much surprised, and affected, at her lady's distress, entreated to know the cause of her grief.—It was sometime, however, before she could satisfy the concern of her faithful attendant. At last she cried; “Oh Ellen! I am soon going to leave the Castle.”—“To leave the Castle, my lady!” echoed Ellen, surprised—“Heaven forbid! Ah! what then will become of poor Mr. Edgar! He will kill himself, to a certainty, when you are gone. But I hope, my lady, wherever you go, you will take your faithful Ellen with you.” “What is it you say, Ellen, about Edgar?” cried Elfrida, with emotion. “Why should you think he would be so much concerned at my departure? His exercises, and various studies, will too much occupy his time, to make him regret the loss of my company.—And yet, I think, he will regret the evening walks, we so often take together.” “I dare be sworn
he

he will, my lady : and more than them : for his man Philip says, he is always a talking of your ladyship. It was only the other day, that Philip said to me ; ‘ This is my young master’s exercising day ; and he got no sleep, I’ll venture a wager, for thinking of those ribbons, your lady gave him, for his colours. I am afraid they will make an infidel of him ; as he kisses, and prays to them : I verily believe, and, besides, wears them next his heart.’

The most pleasurable sensation pervaded the bosom of Elfrida, at this account.—“ And did Philip really tell you this nonsense, Ellen ?” said she. “ Indeed, my lady, he did,” replied she. “ And he says besides, he knows a great deal more, which he is afraid to tell me ; for fear it should ever come to his master’s ears, who would never forgive him, for mentioning a word of the matter.—For,” said Philip, ‘ I suppose Mr. Edgar is fearful of giving her ladyship offence, if she should come to know the truth.

Alas, poor young gentleman, many's the time, and oft, he calls upon her name; and sighs, as if his heart would break!—I am sure, if I was your young lady, Ellen, I could not have the heart to refuse such a fine young gentleman, as my master is; though he was not altogether as rich as myself.'

Elfrida sighed.—“But did you not,” cried she with hesitation—“Did you not ask, what it was that Edgar had told him?” “O yes, my lady, to be sure I did; and promised, I never would tell your ladyship a syllable of the matter: though I can assure you, I meant to tell you every word; well knowing the pleasure it would give your ladyship, to hear that Mr. Edgar loved you.” Vexation now and confusion kept Elfrida silent. She saw plainly, that her weakness was discovered by Ellen; who, in her loquacious simplicity, might unintentionally betray the secret of her heart; a secret, which she had vainly hoped, had been undiscovered but by herself.—Ellen, therefore, uninterrupted went on with her discourse.

discourse. "And said I, Mr. Philip, as to the matter of that, if I was even for to tell my lady, she is so good-natured, she never would take offence at any thing of the kind: Mr. Edgar being so great a favorite with her, that I am certain, were he to love her ten times more than he does, she would rather be pleased than angry at it." "And did you dare tell this to Philip?" (cried Elfrida, angrily interrupting her) "and have you been exposing me to his servant, by repeating any little discourse, I may have foolishly held with you, about Mr. de Montford?" "I am sure my lady," (replied Ellen, affrighted at the angry manner of Elfrida, having never seen her so much moved before) "I meant no harm.—Indeed, I thought no lady could be offended, with having the love of so fine and handsome a young man, as Mr. Edgar is: besides, so noble, brave, and generous, and, withal, so modest, that he thinks nothing of being so much above the other gentleman, as to be sure he is."

Here Ellen was running on, in the praises of de Montford; when Elfrida, mildly interrupting her, said; "I am not displeased that Edgar should have a great regard for me.—It is natural he should: you know well, Ellen, we were brought up together. But I fear, you have repeated some of the conversations, I have held with you about him, to Philip.—I look upon Edgar as a brother; and, therefore, have oftener mentioned him, than the other young men, who visit the Castle.—But, if I thought," (continued she, in rather a sterner tone) "that you had betrayed me; this hour should be the last you attended my person: Agatha should supply your place." "Oh! believe me, my lady, I never would betray you!" said Ellen, weeping. "I never have mentioned, how much your ladyship loved, and admired Mr. Edgar.—I call all the Saints in the Calendar to witness, I never said a word, about how often your ladyship praises and prefers him, to all the young noblemen, that visit here. No, I scorn to betray your ladyship; that

that I do : and I must say, that if Agatha is put over me, I have not deserved it from your ladyship's hands."

Here she ceased; but continued weeping, whilst Elfrida's confusion and vexation, at Ellen's having made a discovery, which she had so unwillingly allowed herself to make, was unequalled.—But, stifling her chagrin and concern; "Well Ellen," cried she, "I am glad to hear, you have not mentioned any thing, that has passed between you and me, respecting Mr. de Montford : and, upon condition you promise solemnly, you never will, I will forgive you."—To which Ellen joyfully agreed. "And," said Elfrida, "upon these conditions, I have no objection to your telling me any little circumstance, relating to Edgar, that may happen; or, what this silly thing, he has said about me to Philip, is."

Ellen, having repeated her former vows of secrecy, now entreated of her lady to be informed,

informed, where she was going to. But, when she heard, Elfrida was going to Court, nothing could exceed her joy. "Dear my lady," cried she; "and, can the thoughts of seeing the Court make you so dull? where we shall see all the Lords, and Ladies, and Knights, and all the Tournaments, and Shows! Then, to be sure, some great knight will fall deeply in love with your ladyship; and his 'squire, forsooth, will be teizing me with letters.—And, if your ladyship should be cruel, the poor knight will certainly kill himself in despair. How charming all this will be!"

"Have done Ellen," cried Elfrida, "with thy torrent of absurdity, and nonsense. I am sorry to find, you have so little affection for me, as to rejoice at what affords me the greatest uneasiness." "I am sure, my lady," replied Ellen, "I could not have thought, you would have taken so much to heart, leaving this dismal old Castle." "I wonder Ellen," said Elfrida, "you dare to mention
my

my father's Castle, in such disrespectful terms." "I madam!" cried Ellen affrighted, "I mention my lord's Castle, in disrespectful terms!—I call saint Winifred to witness, I never said more or less, than it was old and frightful: and many's the night it frightens me, when I leave your ladyship late, after having been talking of Mr. Edgar, that I have to pass those hideous stone men in armour; who stand at the head of the great stair-case, leading from my lord's chamber. I always shut my eyes, for fear of seeing them; and turn my head the other way.—And, if I do by chance see them, I am ready to sink, and get no sleep all night for thinking of them. I am sure, I wish his lordship would have them taken down; and those dismal old pictures, in the great gallery; especially that of the battle, where the Duke of Clarence was slain. I never see it, but I could almost fancy Mr. Edgar engaged; and shudder where I see him sinking, by the hand of that Scotch Earl!" Perhaps, Elfrida herself might, at the moment, feel the
same

same emotion described by Ellen ; but, out of spirits, and weary with her loquacity.

“ Have I not told you, Ellen,” cried she, “ that I would not have you speak so slightly of this Castle ? ” “ I was only going to tell your ladyship,” replied Ellen, “ of the noise our Robert heard, the other night, in the picture-gallery.” “ I have neither inclination, nor spirits,” said Elfrida, “ to hear your and Robert’s fooleries now : so leave me.” A command which Ellen, though unwillingly, instantly obeyed ; muttering to herself, that it was but too true. Leaving Elfrida to the pleasing reflection, that she was beloved by Edgar, and extremely impatient to know, how he felt at the thought of her departure. She recalled to her remembrance his look, his manner, on her mentioning his quitting the Castle ; and, after canvassing every circumstance of his behaviour, had no remaining doubt left of his affection ; and that his true greatness of soul alone, prevented his disclosing his passion to her.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

OCCUPIED in these pleasing reflections of her de Montford's nobleness of soul, the time imperceptibly slipped away, till the hour she commonly attended her father arrived; when, after having more carefully than usual adjusted the ornaments of her hair, she quitted her apartment, and joined the Baron, who was waiting for her in the great parlour. "You look more cheerful, my life," said his lordship, as she entered the room; "and are, I hope, more reconciled to the thoughts of your journey." Elfrida, from some reason or other, blushed at this remark of her father, but made no answer.

answer. "I propose writing to-morrow," continued he, "to the Earl, to fix the time for my Elfrida's departure: I think you cannot delay it longer than a fortnight; and by then you will have had time to make the necessary preparations." Elfrida answered, she would be ready at the expiration of that period.

The Baron now desired one of the servants to call de Montford; who returned, soon after, saying Mr. Edgar was gone out.

Elfrida felt piqued, that he should, now her stay was so short, neglect any opportunity of being in her company. "What says de Montford, my love," (said the Baron, attentively viewing her as he spoke) "on being deprived of his companion and friend?" "I have not spoken to him, my lord, on the subject," replied Elfrida blushing—"he left the room, immediately after your lordship." The Baron looked pleased.

Elfrida,

Elfrida, willing to change the subject, asked some questions concerning her Uncle; of whom she had heard, she said, the character of being proud and haughty. "The world, my Elfrida," replied the Baron, in answer to her question, will generally speak ill of the powerful and great; and rarely mention the good qualities they possess. Thus, a mean and sordid mind, envious of the applause, bestowed on a noble and generous one, will studiously catch at every error, in their conduct, to bring them, in some degree, upon a level with themselves."

"I cannot tell, my lord," (said Elfrida, upon perceiving her father had ceased speaking) "but I always felt a dislike to the thought of being with my Uncle. Your lordship too once hinted to me, that he meditates a match between me, and his eldest son, Lord Graham.—That circumstance alone, would make me dislike the visit; and, to acknowledge the truth, I have conceived, but from what cause I cannot determine, a repugnancy

repugnancy at the idea of being in his company."

"Your own good sense, my love," (said the Baron, rather gravely, yet without discovering whether or not his inclinations led him to the match) "will correct prejudices, which have not reason for their foundation." "I hope it will, my lord," returned Elfrida; "but, besides the pain these reflections, whether well or ill grounded, give me; who can wonder, or blame the reluctance I feel, at the thought of leaving the best of fathers, for a world, which, from every account I have read, and more especially from the description your lordship has so often given me, I have no inclination to enter, or engage in?"

"I find Elfrida," replied the Baron, "that you have, in this, misapprehended me.—I have been careful to impress into your young mind, that the world was not that continued scene of happiness, which a youthful

ful imagination paints to itself, whilst secluded from its enjoyments.—The world, believe me, has its pleasures; and great ones too, when indulged in a moderate degree, and without satiating the mind, by a too frequent repetition of them; which palls the appetite, and breeds indifference and disgust. I have also warned you against the snares of insidious deceivers, who, under the mask of love, might value the fortunes my Elfrida will one day possess, more than the inestimable jewel to whom they will belong: and, above all, my aim was, that you might not repine at your seclusion from the world, from a too high conception of its enjoyments.”

“And, could my father ever imagine,” cried Elfrida, “that his daughter could be such an ingrate, when conscious that his whole study has been for her happiness, and improvement?” “No, my life,” replied the Baron; “Well I know, my Elfrida’s heart is incapable of ingratitude.—But, when your young companions, too young perhaps

to have tasted the bitters of life, may have described its varied sweets, and pitied your not participating in them; unconscious, you might let regret poison those calm pleasures, and innocent amusements, which, I am happy to see, you now forego with reluctance."

The Baron was here interrupted, by one of the domestics calling him out, on some business; and Elfrida, fancying a walk would relieve her mind from unpleasant reflection, strolled down the grove, which was her favorite retreat, and was much frequented, by her and Edgar.

Half way they formerly had united their infant labours; de Montford having planted a young oak, around which Elfrida had twisted some ivy, which now had grown very thick about it.—She stopped involuntarily, as she arrived at the spot; and was met there by the gardener.

"Your servant Gregory," said Elfrida:
"how does your Wife, and my little God-
daughter,

daughter Rose?" "All well, an't please your ladyship; and frequently inquire after your honour's health.—But, my lady," continued Gregory, looking very sorrowful, and scratching his head, "one of the servants, belonging to the Castle, has been telling me, as how your ladyship is going to leave us.—Alack! when that is the case, there will not be a dry eye, within ten miles of the Castle; as there are many, besides my Goody and little ones, who bless your honour's goodness to them, and often have partaken of your ladyship's bounty. And, as to little Rose, she will break her heart, when she hears you are going to leave the country.—Ah! who knows that you will ever come back?" "I am obliged to you, honest Gregory," returned Elfrida, "for the regard you bear me; but be assured I shall not long be absent from my Lord."

"Thank God for that," said the old man joyfully; "I will go and tell my Goody this, before she is told the sad tidings of your ladyship's

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dyship's leaving us." "Gregory," said Elfrida, "how carefully you prune that ivy, and twine it round that oak!" "I prune it, my lady," cried Gregory! "No, indeed, it is as much as my life is worth to touch it; as young Master Edgar has forbid my ever meddling with it.—I never saw him in such a passion, in my life, as he was, the other day, with our Robert, only for the matter of lopping off a bit, that grew irregular: but I suppose it was, because of your ladyship's planting." Elfrida blushed excessively, whilst honest Gregory was relating this little circumstance; and, wishing the man a good evening, she continued her walk.

Seating herself on a bench, which was placed at some small distance from the spot described, she delivered herself up to her reflections. After having remained, for some time, absorbed in thought, she was disturbed by a rustling amongst the trees. Upon looking up, she saw de Montford, standing with his back towards her, leaning against a tree, opposite

opposite the young oak before-mentioned.—A kind of trembling agitation seized her, upon this sight; and she felt irresolute, whether she should join him, or proceed onwards with her walk. A certain impulse, however, made her determine for the former, as she fancied she wanted to speak to him. On her joining him, he started, and looked confused!

“Why Edgar,” (said Elfrida, assuming a gay air) “you seem buried in thought.—Will you not favor your friend with the subject of such deep contemplations?” “I have not vanity sufficient, Madam,” gravely returned he, “to suppose they would afford your ladyship any amusement.—And indeed,” continued he, deeply sighing, “they were not of the most pleasurable kind.”—“You are grave, de Montford,” cried Elfrida, inwardly malicious enough to enjoy his pain, from guessing, probably, the cause. “Perhaps, I have reason, Madam, to be out of spirits.” “Then, for that reason,”

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replied

replied she, "you should impart the cause to a friend, who has always treated you with the most unlimited confidence, and has ever taken a sister's interest, in all your concerns."

"Your ladyship," said Edgar, "was ever condescendingly kind; and, if I now conceal a single thought from you, believe me it is, because I would not forfeit that sweet confidence, and friendship, which it is my pride, and boast, hitherto to have deserved."

Elfrida now felt her face glow with blushes; and most heartily repented having urged him so far. Greatly, however, she admired that noble forbearance, which prevented his availing himself of the opportunity, that offered, of disclosing his passion.

Edgar, observing she looked confused at the speech which he had made, tried to give it a different turn: "And, can lady Elfrida wonder," said he, taking her hand with an affectionate freedom, "that I should look grave, or feel concerned, after having been
so

so highly distinguished by her favor, when I know I shall soon lose her? Could I feel cheerful on such an occasion, I should, indeed, be unworthy of her friendship, and regard.—See Elfrida,” continued he, “See before us a monument of our infant friendship.—Observe that oak, round which you, in compliment to my labours, entwined the ivy.—Is it not an emblem of conjugal affection? Does it not express the tender female, looking up for support, and protection, from her more able consort? Happy, thrice happy, will that man be, to whom lady Elfrida thus, like the ivy, looks up, for the assistance, her tender sex requires!” A sigh accompanied these words.

“Upon my word, de Montford,” (cried Elfrida, striving to conceal the emotion this speech gave her) “you are grown quite poetical of late.” “Ah! who,” replied Edgar, with energy; “having such a subject, but must feel himself inspired!” “A truce with your compliments, Edgar, I want to talk with you about this visit to my Uncle.”

“But, lady Elfrida,” (cried the youth, looking earnestly in her face, without regarding what she had said) “there is another circumstance, another circumstance, which doubly endears the spot, and will ever make me hold it sacred.—Do you not remember it, Elfrida?” continued he, gazing on her face, with impassioned tenderness.—Then, as if recollecting himself, he checked his transport, and, casting down his eyes, he assumed a more distant manner. “Pardon me, Madam,” said he, “if, in recalling our childish amusements, I make more free.” “What is this circumstance, you allude to?” cried Elfrida, her curiosity being awakened. “Has lady Elfrida, then, quite forgot the charming token, she gave me, of her approbation, when we had finished our united work? The delightful kiss, with which she honoured me, as a reward for my share of the labour? Boy though I then was, never shall I forget the sensation of ecstatic delight, it occasioned in me.—Never will the

the remembrance of that charming moment be erased from my memory."

Blushes now, of the deepest dye, suffused the cheeks of Elfrida; who, with trembling steps, hastened from a spot, which had caused her such confusion: whilst de Montford, fearful of having offended her, from her averted looks, dejectedly followed in silence.

It was some time, before either of them could sufficiently recall their scattered thoughts, so as to speak collectedly on any subject.—At last, de Montford, unable longer to bear the idea of having offended Elfrida, without entreating her forgiveness, broke silence: "And, have I been so unfortunate, lady Elfrida," cried he mournfully, "as to offend you, by relating a circumstance, which afforded me the most innocent delight? by recalling that sweet instance of the sisterly affection, you once bore me?" "You have an excellent memory, Mr. de Montford," replied Elfrida, forcing into her manner a

coldness, which was foreign from her heart. "Ah! why Elfrida," cried Edgar passionately, "Why that distant appellation? That frigid coldness in your looks? Looks which, till now, were ever sweetly smiling on me. By Heaven, I meant not to offend you! But the circumstance was so strongly imprinted on my memory, and struck my imagination so forcibly, whilst you were on the spot, that my evil genius impelled me to remind you of it.—Believe me, never, never will I again offend you with the subject." "Well, well," said Elfrida, "let us then drop the conversation." "And, do you, then, pardon me, Elfrida?"—"Upon these conditions," cried she, "I do." Edgar delighted, with difficulty forbore kissing the hand she held out, in token of reconciliation; but, fearful of again offending her, he restrained his inclinations.

"Edgar," (said Elfrida, willing to end the subject) "have you had any farther conversation with my father, respecting your
joining

joining the army in France?" "I have, Madam," replied he, "my Lord has received letters from the Earl of Salisbury, which declare his return to England having been delayed, by express desire of the Regent: of course, my departure remains doubtful, as to time; your father intending I should be placed under the immediate protection of that Nobleman.—Oh! Lady Elfrida," continued he, "how much am I indebted to your excellent father, for his kindness to my unprotected youth! How shall I ever repay so vast a debt! The whole service of my life would not suffice! With what pleasure would I lay it down to serve him!"

"Your gratitude, de Montford," returned Elfrida, "amply repays him; and I know well, the generosity of my father's temper requires no farther proof." "I know it, Elfrida; but, should your noble father, or dear self, ever require the assistance of a poor youth like me, I vow to Heaven,"

continued he, kneeling, "that the life which beats within this bosom, should freely be devoted to your service!" "Do rise, Edgar," (cried Elfrida, much affected with what had passed) "I well know your grateful disposition; but hope never to have such a proof of it." Elfrida, feeling herself rather indisposed, and the evening closing apace, proposed returning home. "Will not you accept my arm, Elfrida?" cried Edgar, alarmed at her emotion: "You seem fatigued."—She put her arm through his, and they proceeded slowly towards the Castle.—She tried to rally her exhausted spirits; and, finding the subject on which they had been discoursing, too painful, longer to dwell upon, she tried to change it, by speaking of her own departure.

"I wish," said she, "my lord would not make so great a point of my complying with the Earl's invitation: I do assure you, it is far from being my wish.—My father is now old, and requires a daughter's care and attention.

tention.—Not but in de Montford, my want will be supplied:—But yet, I cannot bear to leave him.—How happy am I to think,” continued she, “that when I do, I leave him with one, who anticipates his every wish!”

“In affording your noble father the least satisfaction,” said Edgar, “if ever I have been so happy, I have experienced a more exquisite delight, than a son, who loves and reveres a fond parent, can feel, whilst contributing to his highest happiness. But, my lord,” continued he, “justly considers, the world has a right to claim some share, in the enjoyment of lady Elfrida’s company; nor should those charms, which were formed to grace the most brilliant circles, be buried in oblivion here. Many will she leave behind, to mourn her absence; but none more truly, than de Montford.” His voice faltered, as he finished these words; and he sighed deeply.

“ Believe me, Edgar,” replied Elfrida, “ I shall equally regret the society of my friends at the Castle.” “ The Marquis of Stafford,” said de Montford, forcing a smile, “ will be a gainer by our loss. He will not be unhappy, I suspect, at having an opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with the lady Elfrida.” As he said this, he looked archly at her. “ Our pleasure, then,” replied she, “ will not be mutual.—I cannot say I am partial to that young nobleman :— There is a negligent boldness in his manners, which is to me extremely disgusting.” “ He is unfortunate,” said Edgar, “ in having incurred your displeasure. I was before envying him his happiness, in having opportunities of being with you ; but now, I find he is more capable of exciting my pity, than envy ; as I am sure,” continued he, “ lady Elfrida is too generous, to condemn unjustly.”

“ Your servant, Sir,” cried she, smiling, “ am I to take this as a compliment, or a reproof ?”

a reproof?" "No man," replied Edgar, "could have the presumption, to suppose your ladyship merited reproof. Is not, however, lady Elfrida a little too severe upon the Marquis; nor makes her usual candid allowances for the faults of education? Bred up in the knowledge of the vast estates he will inherit; surrounded too with flatterers, and parasites, a disposition, naturally good, has been spoiled; and hence that presumption in his manners, which so much disgusts you: a fault, which reason, and his better sense, as he advances in years, will no doubt correct."

"Very possibly," replied Elfrida coldly; "And then," cried Edgar smiling, "he will reinstate himself in your ladyship's favour; at least, I hope he will." "Why should de Montford concern himself," said she, "about my sentiments of Stafford? My approbation, or dislike, can be of very little consequence to him." "Pardon me, Madam," cried he, "I should feel so unhappy myself, at forfeiting your good opinion,

nion, that I feel interested for every one who is so unfortunate." "I do not think, de Montford, that ever will be the case," replied Elfrida, blushing and looking down.—The youth, bowing, returned his acknowledgments, for her very favourable sentiments of him.

They now had reached the Castle; and were met by father Anthony. "Bless you my children," said the old man.—Then, turning to Elfrida, he inquired if she had a pleasant walk. "It is a sweet evening, Father," returned she. "Mr. de Montford," said the Father, "you will soon lose the pleasure of lady Elfrida's company, in your evening walks; and will be obliged to put up with mine." "However," replied the youth, "I may regret the loss of her Ladyship's company, I shall always think Father Anthony honours me, by giving me his." "Ah! my son," cried Anthony, "you are a young flatterer." "Indeed, Father," said Elfrida, "he barely does justice to your merit."

rit." "Well, Heaven bless you both," returned the Father, "for I love you as my children; and shall always pray for both your happiness.—And, God forgive the man, that will part such a pair," said he, when they had left him; "for, surely, Heaven intended them for each other."

As the Father continued looking after the young couple, Philip, Edgar's servant, accosted him. "Save you, reverend Father," cried he, "I saw your reverence speaking to my young master just now.—Did he seem in his usual spirits?" "He seemed," replied the Father, "to labour under no uneasiness; and, if he does, I trust, the principles of religion, I have instilled into his mind, will enable him to bear it, with that fortitude, and firm reliance on the Supreme Being, which becomes a christian, and a man." "Ay, that he will, an't please your reverence, if any one does, for he is the best of young men; and I never knew him capable of committing a mean, or an ungenerous action."

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“ He is, as you say, Philip, a very noble-minded young man ; and I wish, fortune had intended him for the lady Elfrida ; for they are a heavenly pair.—But,” continued the Father, “ the ways of Providence are dark, and inscrutable, to the eyes of us, poor mortals, whose duty it is to be thankful, for the numberless blessings we enjoy, without daring to murmur at what is withheld from us. But what, Philip, did you allude to ? has any accident happened to my pupil ? ” “ Why, no, Father, no accident, to be sure, has happened,” said Philip with hesitation : “ But I believe there is a little bit of love, lurking at the bottom of his heart ; and you know, we are going to lose our young lady.—That I thought might afflict Mr. Edgar.” “ I have observed,” answered the Father, “ the passion he entertains for the lady Elfrida, notwithstanding the pains he takes to hide it : a forbearance, which greatly endears him to me ; as it shews the nobleness of his mind, which would not take the advantage, his situation gives him.—And I am much mistaken,

taken, if the fair object of his love does not feel a similar passion."

"Ay, Father," replied Philip, "we are all blessed with eyes, to distinguish the difference betwixt good and bad.—And, I warrant, her ladyship has found out, as well as other folks, that few come up to Mr. Edgar, in any thing.—Though I know him so well, that, if even she was to tell him, she loved him, better than e'er a young lord of them all, without my Lord, the Baron, approved of it, he would not profit by her regard, nor think himself worthy of being her husband; seeing he does not possess a fortune, to match with hers.—But, I believe, my Lord intends, very shortly, to send him to the wars; as his father, my late master, always intended he should bear arms: and that, I hope, will cure him.—War is the only mistress for a soldier."

"Does de Montford, (inquired Father Anthony, musing) "resemble his father?"

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“Why no, an’t please your Reverence,” replied Philip, lowering his voice; “for my part, I never could find any likeness whatever: the gentlefolks that visited my master, used to say there was; but, to tell you the truth, I cannot help having my doubts, that he is the son of Sir Philip.”—

“Edgar not the son of your master! you surprise me Philip.”—“You know, Father, that, at best, he is but a natural child.”—

“I know it; but why doubt his being Sir Philip’s son? Surely he would have acquainted my Lord, who was his most intimate friend, if such had been the case.”—“Oh! as to that,” replied Philip, “my master never had any suspicions to the contrary.—My reason for being of that opinion is,—but your Reverence must promise secrecy,” cried Philip, stopping short in his promised explanation. “I promise it solemnly,” replied the Father impatiently, his curiosity being much awakened. “Why then you must know, that the supposed mother of Mr. de Montford,” (continued Philip, speaking in a low

a low key) “ never had any children, till Sir Philip and she had a sad falling out; and my master declared his intentions of marrying, to have an heir to his estates. This threat put the mother of Edgar in grievous taking, and soon after, she declared herself three months gone with child; and wrote to Sir Philip, to entreat of him not to abandon her, in such a situation. Upon this, Father,” continued Philip, “ they grew reconciled; and, at the usual time, she brought a child into the world; whom, my master named Edgar, after his father.—We were both absent, during the time of her delivery; but her woman and confident, who attended her, upon some quarrel with her lady, threw out hints of Edgar’s not being the son of Sir Philip; and that she could discover something, which would astonish him.—However, soon after, her mistress and her made up their disagreement: and, when I questioned her, concerning the words she had let drop, respecting the birth of the child, she at first denied having uttered them; but afterwards,

terwards acknowledged what she had said; yet declared they had proceeded only, from a desire of revenge.—As for me, seeing Sir Philip immoderately fond of the child, I thought it a pity to acquaint him with what the woman had said; knowing well, it would only render him unhappy, and deprive him of a great deal of pleasure.—One thing, I must confess, struck me, upon first viewing the infant, which was, that he looked more like a child of four months, than one of two; which the lady averred was his age, at the time of our return.”

“These circumstances, Philip,” cried the Father, “are strange to be sure; but are, by no means, convincing proofs, that Edgar is not the son of Sir Philip de Montford: and, as the divulging what you have related to me, would only perplex Edgar, and my Lord the Baron, I would advise you to confide it to no other bosom but mine: where it shall remain as secret as it has in your own; till time, or change in the youth’s affairs, may warrant the avowal.”

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"It shall go no farther for me," replied Philip, "without the advice of your Reverence."

"Is the lady," inquired the Father, "who is supposed to be his mother, alive?" "I believe she is," replied Philip; "though I have not heard of her, for some years.—I believe, my master left her something handsome, as my Lord the Baron, when I went to fetch my young master, to reside with him, gave me a sum of money for her, with a promise of allowing her the same annually, in case her future conduct merited it. She wept much, on hearing Edgar was to be taken from her; and the parting between them was truly affecting. However, about a year after my old master's death, upon inquiring after her, I was informed, she had left England, and was supposed to be in France; though I could not meet with certain information."

"Does Edgar," asked Father Anthony, "ever inquire after his mother?" "Yes, frequently,

frequently, and often regrets, that he cannot see, or hear from her." 'Ah! Philip,' has he cried, 'would I could meet with my unhappy mother, that I might pay her that duty, I owe her as a son. How does this heart soften and melt into tenderness, at the thought that I may one day be pressed in the arms of a fond—would that I could say virtuous mother; who will view me with maternal exultation, and rapture! To hear myself called by the tender appellation of child!' "Oft times," continued Philip, "will he, after having discoursed together concerning his parents, exclaim,"—"Oh! that I had been of honest birth, though poor; that, whilst pronouncing the names of father and mother, I should not blush at the frailties of my parents!" "He then will sigh deeply, and abruptly break off the discourse.—And, between you and me Father, what with this cause of vexation, and his love for the lady Elfrida, he has many an unhappy hour.—But I hope, we shall soon join the army of
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the Regent; and then he will have no time to brood over vexatious thoughts."

"What, Philip," said Anthony, "do you intend to accompany Mr. Edgar to France?" "Ay, to be sure, Father, a soldier's is the life for me." "You talk gaily, methinks, for a man of your years."—"Why, please your Reverence, I was born, and bred, I may say, amidst wars and battles; and I have still strength enough left, to be of some little service to my King and Country.—Besides, it will do this old heart good, to see my young master fight bravely, as I am sure he will: and, let the worst come to the worst, I may lose my life to be sure; but Death, as you often tell us, Father, is a debt we must all, one time or other, pay.—And, surely, for a soldier, it is more seemly for him to fall, fighting for the good of his country, than die tamely in a bed." As Philip ended these words, he quitted the Father, and entered the Castle.

C H A P. VII.

FROM a variety of circumstances, that have been here inserted, the Reader long since must have observed, that Elfrida was beloved by de Montford.

The first attacks of this fatal passion, the youth combated, with his utmost force.—The nobleness of his nature, his high sense of honour, which rebelled at the idea of betraying the trust, his benefactor reposed in him, were powerful obstacles against the indulgence of it.

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He would sometimes fancy, from the peculiar complacency, with which Elfrida treated him, that he was not indifferent to her. Then again, he would severely condemn himself for the thought; and accuse himself of vanity, and presumption, for giving way to such flattering suggestions.

One day, Philip abruptly entered his room, whilst he held some ribbons to his lips, which Elfrida had presented him with. De Montford coloured; and was vexed, at being thus surprised. "Why this intrusion, Philip?" angrily demanded he. "Ah! Sir, forgive me," cried Philip; "I knew not how you were employed, or I would not have interrupted you; though I have long guessed, how it was with your honour." "What mean you?" said de Montford, in a tone of anger, and confusion. "Ah! my dear master; and do you think, your faithful Philip, who watches every turn of your noble countenance, has not, ere this, found out your love for the lady Elfrida; whom, I hope,

and make no doubt, I shall one of these days see yours ?”

“ Philip,” exclaimed Edgar, agitated beyond expression, “ name not, I beseech thee, that flattering delusive idea : never, never can Elfrida de Clifford be mine ; birth, fortune, rank, every thing, forbid it : and, as you value my honour, and happiness, never let what you just now have been witness to, and what you seem to suspect, escape your lips. Alas !” continued the youth sighing, “ the felicity of possessing such an Angel, as the lady Elfrida, was not destined for such a wretch as I am.—No ; may she be happy, in the arms of a more deserving object, whatever becomes of the wretched de Montford ! and, to know that she is so, will alleviate the severity of my sufferings. But, never shall the knowledge of what I endure, disturb her repose, or diminish ought her pleasures.” “ Ah ! my dear master,” (cried Philip, the tears flowing fast down his aged cheeks) “ you will break my heart, if you
talk

talk in this manner; you that are worthy of the finest lady, in the British land: and, though lady Elfrida is, to be sure, a sweet and charming Lady; yet you deserve her,—indeed you do. And who knows,” continued the old man, in a gayer tone, “how things may turn out, if my lord the Barón were but to be informed, how matters are?”

“As you love me, Philip,” cried Edgar, interrupting him with impatience, “do not, I conjure thee, ever drop the most distant hint to my Lord, of my unfortunate passion. Whilst I conceal it, though imprudent in ever giving it place in this breast, yet am I free from guilt.—Nor can it be wondered at, that, constantly beholding the united charms, and perfections, of the lady Elfrida, my heart should own her power.—But, the moment I avow, or confess it to her, I should be the worst of villains; by betraying the confidence, my generous benefactor reposes in me, by an attempt to seduce the affections of his daughter; and, probably, by rendering

her disobedient to his wishes.—No, Philip, my soul abhors such black ingratitude; and spurns so base an act. Nor, believe me, would I marry Elfrida, my Lord consenting, until, by this arm, I had raised a name, worthy of giving her.

But this is a subject, my good Philip,” (continued de Montford, preventing an answer, seeing him about to reply) “ which pains me, even to agony, and harrows up my soul! Let us for ever drop it; and, should I ever act, contrary to the sentiments, I have now professed, tell me, I am a Villain!”

“ Ah! never, never, my dearest master, shall I have reason to say that.—You are too good for this world; and Heaven, I hope, will reward your goodness.”

“ Leave me now, Philip,” said Edgar;
“ I would compose myself, before I attend
my Lord; and endeavour to repress those
flattering

flattering suggestions, you have raised to my imagination." Philip now left the room; saying, as he went: "It ought to be a match; indeed it ought, my dearest master!"

CHAP. VIII.

ABOUT a week previous to the intended departure of Elfrida, the good Baron fell sick.

His strength daily forsook him; and, notwithstanding all his endeavours, to keep the knowledge of what he suffered, from his afflicted family, his changed countenance proclaimed,

claimed, what his tenderness would not let him avow.—In a few days he was disabled from leaving his chamber. De Montford and his daughter tried, by reading, and various methods, to alleviate the severe pains, which oppressed him.

Physicians were called in, who pronounced very unfavourable prognostics. Nothing now could exceed the distress of Elfrida, and the anxiety of Edgar. Incessantly did the former petition Heaven, to spare her beloved parent to her. Afraid of adding to his disorder, by evincing her fears, she repressed them, whilst in his presence; and to Edgar alone would she impart her secret apprehension.—Whilst he, to sooth her bitter anguish, concealed from her, that his heart, also, was torn with the afflicting thought, that he should soon be deprived of his beloved Benefactor, and only friend.

The Baron, sensible of his approaching dissolution, exerted himself, to calm the sor-
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rows of his family, and to prepare their minds for an event, which, he found, must soon take place.

No dejection did he shew, when the physicians, at his earnest request, apprized him of his danger; but for the welfare of Elfrida, and de Montford, he was not a little concerned.

“My Children,” said he, as they knelt around his bed, in speechless agony, “you hear, I am hastening to that period of my existence, which my love for you alone makes painful to me. Afflict not the few short hours, I tarry with you, by this excess of sorrow.”

“You, my Elfrida,” (turning to his daughter) “will lose a protector, whose happiness was centered in his Child’s; and my de Montford a friend, who scarcely loved him less, than he did his Elfrida.—I allow, therefore, for your grief; but let it not be unreasonable.—Confide in Heaven. To the

brave and good Earl of Salisbury, I have, in a letter, committed the care of my Edgar's advancement,¹ and the pleasure of rewarding virtuous merit."

De Montford clasped the hand of the Baron, and watered it with tears.—"Oh! my Friend! my Benefactor! my more than Father! to whom I owe more than my existence—the formation of my mind to Virtue; Oh! teach me, then, fortitude, to bear your loss with patience! Alas! de Montford feels you cannot." He hid his face, with both his hands, overcome with excess of grief.

"My son," (said the Baron, with a firm voice, though much affected with the youth's sorrow) "Man is born to suffer.—This life, at best, is but a weary pilgrimage we tread; and it is our duty, to bear the ills, assigned us in our journey, with fortitude and courage.—True virtue, strengthened by adversity, and patient endurance, whilst it corrects, enlarges and expands the heart; as, by knowing what
it

it is to suffer, we learn to pity the unfortunate.—But, my de Montford requires not that lesson.—Gentle, and compassionate in his nature, he feels for the woes of others.—May he ever be exempted from them, until prosperity hardens his heart; and then, and only then, may it be humbled!”

“Seek out your unhappy mother, my son. Be to her a protector, and a duteous Child. Endeavour to reclaim her, Edgar; and bring her erring steps to those paths of virtue, and of honour, from which, alas, she has widely strayed. The entreaties of a long lost Son may have some weight with her.—Philip tells me, she has chosen France, for her place of residence.”

“To you, my Child” continued the Baron, “Child of my adoption, I have bequeathed my Estate in Norfolk, trifling as it is, and unequal to my de Montford’s merit.—Yet, the hand that gives it, I know, will stamp a value on it. I would not have

de Montford, as yet, too rich: Added to your own little patrimony, it will answer a Soldier's wants. Do not interrupt me;" (seeing the youth about to express his gratitude) "it is no more than common justice to your virtue. May it render you the service I wish; and I am fully repaid. To your faithful Philip I have left a small legacy, to keep him above want, in his declining age. I would, however, have you keep him always with you; he is a good man, and an affectionate servant; and, as such, should be rewarded. But forgive your Father, my Edgar, his taking, in part, that pleasing task from you.—You will have sufficient claims on your generous spirit."

"I have no advice to give my Children;" (turning now both to Edgar and Elfrida) "as their conduct, in every respect, has merited my warmest approbation, and answered my most sanguine wishes. Continue but such as ye are, and you will ever secure the esteem of the truly great and good." The
Baron

Baron paused, whilst the young pair were both too much affected to reply.

The Baron, now taking the hand of his daughter, said to her, "with you, my Child, I would be, for some minutes private.—Leave us my Edgar." De Montford arose, and kissing the hand of his benefactor, he bathed it with tears of gratitude, and left the room.

"My life," (said the Baron, addressing Elfrida, when Edgar had withdrawn) "Shrink not from the trial, I am going to put you to. Remember, it is your Father, your tenderest of friends, that now demands from you, the situation of your heart." An universal trembling shook the frame of Elfrida; confused, and terrified, she awaited the dreaded demand; whilst the Baron, in a solemn manner, thus began:—"As it is not permitted me by Heaven, to make a much longer stay on earth, I wish to employ the little time allotted me, in promoting the happiness of my

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darling Child." "And, must we then part? Oh! my father!" cried Elfrida, her eyes streaming with tears. "We must; I feel we must, my Elfrida," returned his Lordship, with a faltering voice! The regrets of a fond parent, at the thought of parting with a beloved Child, were, at that moment, more powerful, than the calm resignation, proper for a Christian. The Baron felt unmanned. His voice trembled, in unison with his feelings.—He paused a moment, to recover his firmness: but Nature prevailed, and refused to second the effort.—She drew him to the arms of his daughter: where, for some minutes, tears were the only language, either could speak.

The convulsed sobs of Elfrida, at last, brought the Baron to himself; and caused him to feel ashamed of his weakness. He made a strong effort to repress his emotions; and reassuming, with difficulty, his composure, he withdrew himself from her arms.—"I set you but a poor example, my love,"
said

said he, smiling through his tears; "and, were I now to bid you cease to grieve, at the inevitable fate that awaits me, my daughter would have reason to put her Father in mind, that his example accords not with his precept.—But let me, my Child," (continued the Baron, feeling himself recovered) "let me, now that I have the power, resume the important subject."

"When time has mellowed my Elfrida's first emotion of sorrow, for the loss of her Parent, into a pleasing, though melancholy remembrance of him, her friends will be anxious for her settling in life, by an union with some one deserving of her, in birth, fortune, and merit. Your Uncle, my love," continued the Baron, taking her by the hand, "has frequently intimated a wish, of seeing you espoused to his Son and Heir, by a former marriage, the Lord Graham. Ever anxious for the happiness of my Child, I wished not, by an avowal of my sentiments, and wishes, on the occasion, to bias her young
and

and duteous mind. What says my Elfrida?" "And is it the wish of my Father," cried she, in evident disorder, "that I should give my hand to Graham?" "My wish, Elfrida, is for your happiness;" returned his Lordship gravely. "And, though the match, in point of worldly advantages, meets my approbation; yet Lord Graham is not, I confess, the man, I should select for the husband of my daughter." Elfrida felt relieved; and the Baron, after a pause of some moments, continued: "Few; indeed, are worthy of possessing her. One only I know; and merit alone recommends him."

The Baron fixed his eyes on her glowing face. "Tell me, my daughter," continued he, "if the brilliant qualities, de Montford so eminently possesses, have not made an impression on your young heart."

The situation now of Elfrida was painful, beyond description. A faint sickness came across her heart; and, for some moments,
she

she scarcely respired. "Do not be terrified, my life," said the Baron, tenderly pressing her hand; "nor think your Father will act the tyrant. I wish to advise you.—Confide in your friend, your parent, you shall find him such." Oh! my father!" (cried Elfrida, hiding her tears, and blushes, in his bosom) "your goodness overpowers me! How unworthy is your Elfrida! Alas! she has no heart to bestow.—But, believe me, from this hour, its present object shall be banished from this bosom. I will try to render it obedient to the wishes of the best of Fathers. I will have no will but yours, my Lord: forgive this fault involuntary." She ceased; and the Baron, clasping her in his arms: "Noble, duteous girl," cried he! "How unworthy should I be of the name of Father, could I abuse such ingenuous openness of heart!" Then, looking stedfastly on her averted, and deeply blushing face; "and Edgar de Montford is the man." "Ah! my Lord, do not seek to know my shame.

Yet,

Yet, how ungrateful, to have a secret kept from such a parent!—It is, it is de Montford, my Lord, that possesses your daughter's affections." "And he alone," replied the Baron, "is worthy to possess them.—But, tell me truly, my Child, if he has ever fought to win them.—If so he is"—The Baron finished not his sentence, from the degree of anxiety he felt at his question. "Never my Lord," (cried Elfrida, greatly relieved, yet impatient to clear de Montford's honour) "Your daughter is unacquainted with the sentiments, that Edgar entertains for her.—He has avoided"—She hesitated, as having said too much, "Then he is," returned his Lordship, "the noble youth, I ever thought him: and, if he return with honour, from these wars in France, he shall be rewarded with the hand of my Elfrida.—For well I know he loves her."

Elfrida threw herself at the feet of her Father; penetrated with his goodness.—"Oh! my Lord, my Father," cried she; when I
merited

merited your anger, and severe reproaches, to meet with such indulgence, it overpowers me!" The Baron raised her in his arms.—
"Were Edgar, my Child, possessed of birth and fortunes, to intitle him to my Daughter, before Princes would I prefer him, for my Elfrida's husband.

But, destitute of all worldly advantages, he must, besides his amiable qualities, merit from his services, in the glorious profession he has chosen, so dear a prize. He must raise his name in his Country's annals.—Riches I prize not; and, sinking as I am from this vain world, how contemptible do they appear, when put in competition with honour and merit! In leaving you to Edgar, on these conditions, I insure the happiness of my Elfrida, when time shall have mouldered this frail body into dust."

"Ah! my Lord," cried Elfrida, in an agony of tears; "this heart can form no scheme of happiness, beyond the life of my
Father.

Father. Spare, gracious Heaven!" cried she, kneeling, "to thy afflicted suppliant, so precious an existence!" "It will not be, my Child," said the Baron feebly, "I feel life ebb apace. We must submit, with resignation, to the awards of Heaven."

His Lordship found himself exhausted, and composed himself to rest: whilst the bosom of Elfrida was agitated, by a variety of different emotions. Gratitude for her Father's indulgent goodness, and compliance to her wishes; a compliance, infinitely beyond her most sanguine hopes; and grief, the most lively, at the melancholy thought, that she must soon lose so beloved a Parent, held the principal place in her breast.

In about an hour, the Baron awoke; and found himself much worse. He desired to be left with his Physician, unwilling his Daughter should witness his sufferings. Elfrida saw, with increase of grief, his countenance much changed; and felt wretched, at the thought of leaving him.

In

In passing through the gallery, which led from her Father's apartment, she met de Montford; who was returning, with an intention of visiting his Benefactor's chamber.

Had not Elfrida's whole thoughts been now occupied with her Father's danger, the sight of him, immediately after the scene that had just taken place, would have covered her with confusion.—But, forgetting every idea, besides that afflicting one, she met him as usual.

Taking her hand, with an affectionate freedom, he inquired after the Baron. Tears, at first, were the only reply she could make him: and he had the grief to read, in her afflicted countenance, that a material change had taken place.

When her emotion of grief had, in a small measure, subsided, she communicated to him her Father's wish, to be left to himself. “I was proceeding to the Chapel de Montford,”
said

said she, when I met you, with an intention of beseeching Heaven, to spare my beloved Parent." "I will join in your pious resolution, lovely Elfrida," said Edgar; and O that Heaven might listen to our united prayers!"

At that moment, Father Anthony joined them; and, much approving of their intentions, accompanied them to the Chapel.

Sincerely and fervently did they there pour forth their prayers, and supplications, for the preservation of the good Baron's life.

When the Father had finished, he advanced to the place where de Montford and Elfrida were; and, taking the latter by the hand, "Continue, my Children," said the good Man, "in all your afflictions, to offer up your prayers, and petitions, before the throne of the Supreme; and, whether or not he may think fit, for wise purposes, to withhold from us our seeming good, you will find your minds relieved."

A

A Domestic now, from the Baron, appeared, and desired the Father's immediate attendance on his Lord. With hasty steps Father Anthony quitted the Chapel, to attend his Patron; leaving Edgar, vainly endeavouring to calm the deep distress of Elfrida, whose fears at this message arose to an agony.

In about an hour after, Anthony returned. The traces of recent Tears were visible on his venerable countenance.

“ My Child,” (said he to Elfrida, struggling to assume a composure) “ prepare your mind for the worst: Heaven will not longer than a few short hours spare to us your valuable Parent. Within this hour, he is visibly changed.—But I have left him composed, and resigned to the will of Heaven.—Do not, therefore, dearest Lady, by this grief, discompose or ruffle his last moments, which should alone be dedicated to God.”

Elfrida

Elfrida replied not; but, checking the rising sorrow, which almost rent her heart,—with an air of fixed melancholy, dignified by the resignation, and firmness, it expressed, she arose, and sought the chamber of her Father.

She found him in a deep sleep.—She kneel'd by his bedside, and softly took his hand.—Several times he started.—His colour was considerably heightened. In about an hour, his Lordship awoke.—He gazed earnestly at Elfrida, for some time, without speaking, or answering her inquiries.

At last he cried, “ I have seen your Mother, my Child.—Methought, she beckoned me to the blessed Mansion she inhabits, and held out her arms to receive me.—But, when I attempted to meet her embrace, she vanished from me, saying; “ It is not yet we meet: The appointed hour is not arrived.—Soon it will; and then we meet, my beloved, to part no more.” —The air became filled with
Heavenly

Heavenly music, and I awoke." Oh! my Father," (cried Elfrida, greatly shocked and terrified) "What does this dream portend?" "My Love," replied the Baron feebly, "my last hour approaches near.—Submit, I entreat you, with patience, to the change that will soon take place.—Let all my family be assembled: This warning instructs me, to make a proper use of the time allowed me."

In silent grief the afflicted family kneel'd around the bed, whilst his Lordship employed almost his last moments, in giving advice, and comfort to each individual of them.—In addressing de Montford, (who was almost stupified with sorrow) his voice faltered: it became scarcely articulate. The colour forsook his cheeks.—His pulse fluttered.—Taking the hands of de Montford, and Elfrida, he joined them.—What a moment for Edgar! He essayed to speak, but failed in the attempt.—Then, lifting up his eyes to Heaven, and crossing himself, he expired in the arms of de Montford.

When

When Elfrida found, her beloved Parent had ceased to breathe, all sense forsook her; and she sunk insensible in the arms of her attendants, who bore the unhappy Orphan from the mournful scene.

Whilst Edgar in speechless agony, continued kneeling, and holding in his arms the lifeless body of his Benefactor: and all attempts to move him from it, for several hours, proved ineffectual.

Father Anthony, also, for some time, seemed to forget the resignation he preached, in the deep grief he felt for his worthy Patron.

For some days, the Castle and neighbourhood around were the scene of deepest sorrow. The poor lamented, as for a Parent.

Letters immediately were sent to the Earl of Mortagne, from the Father, acquainting him with the loss they had sustained, and requesting his attendance at the Castle.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

THE fifth day, as Edgar was departing from the chamber of his deceased Friend, he heard the Horn at the great gate, blown with violence. He immediately conjectured, it was the Earl; and hastened down to receive him. A Herald advanced, and proclaimed the coming of the Lord Mortagne.

Presently afterwards his Lordship arrived. Edgar met him at the outer gate, and respectfully conducted him into the Castle.—
“Your name, Sir?” cried the Earl. “De
VOL. I. G Montford,

Montford, my Lord." " You are, then, that Youth, my Brother protected." " The same, my Lord; and every thing do I owe to my Benefactor's goodness." Edgar's eyes bore testimony to his gratitude: He drew his hand across them, to conceal his tears.

They had now reached the great Parlour, when the Earl, seating himself, inquired for his Niece. " The Lady Elfrida, my Lord," said de Montford, (overwhelmed with affliction for the greatness of her loss) " has not yet left her chamber, but to visit that of her Father.

The Earl looked pleased.—" I think, young man," said his Lordship, "*you* have much reason to lament the death of my Brother: He was a good friend to you, I am informed, in every respect.—The Earl laid a stress upon his last words, which Edgar felt. But, listening only to the sensation, his gratitude inspired, he replied with warmth; " I should be lost, my Lord, to every feeling,

ing, were I not most deeply to lament your noble Brother's death. He was, indeed, my Lord, a *Friend* to me. He was the guardian, and instructor, of my unexperienced and unprotected Youth.—Ever dear will be his memory." Edgar turned aside, to conceal his emotion. "Where is my Brother's Chaplain, Sir?" demanded the Earl. "I will desire him to attend your Lordship," replied Edgar, pleased at a pretext to quit the room. "Do so, Sir, and I will thank you."

Edgar withdrew, and presently met with Anthony, who was hastening to the Earl.

"The Earl inquires for you, Father."—"You have seen him, then, my Son." "I have.—Ah! how much unlike his noble relative! But he is the Uncle of Elfrida; and, as such, I respect him.—But his Lordship will be impatient." "I will attend him immediately," said Anthony, leaving the Youth.

Upon the Father's entrance into the apartment, where the Earl was, he found him gazing earnestly at the portrait of the Lady Julia. His countenance betrayed visible discomposure, and he was much agitated.— But, checking his emotion, he received the compliments of Anthony, with tolerable calmness.

After some customary speeches of condolence had passed, on the side of the Father, he, at the desire of the Earl, entered into a minute detail of all the circumstances, relative to the death of the Lord de Clifford.— He also mentioned, that his Patron, a few days before his death, had put into his hands a will; which Anthony offered to give up, for his Lordship's perusal, on the morrow.

The Earl, when the Father had ceased, desired Elfrida might be informed of his arrival; and that he was impatient to see her. “Would not your Lordship first see your Brother?” cried Anthony, rising to attend him.

him. "As it cannot be of service, Father," replied his Lordship, "I would wish to be spared that fight." Anthony made no reply.

"My late Brother was a good man, I think, Father," said the Earl musing; "but much estranged himself from his family." "My Lord," cried Anthony with warmth, "my Benefactor was the best of Men—And, I am afraid, has left few Noblemen behind, to equal him in goodness. The Lord de Clifford was the best of Fathers, of Guardians; the most generous of Protectors; the kindest of Masters; and the bravest of Soldiers. Blessings followed his steps; and, at his approach, each eye filled with delight.—Hear but his aged Soldiers speak of him.—But, wherefore should I make more use of words than one, to express his character? my Lord was a *Christian*."

"You are an excellent Encomiast, Father," said his Lordship, rather hastily. "I barely do justice, my Lord," returned Anthony,

thony, "to my Patron's virtues: and no one who really knew him, but would join me, in bearing witness to the truth of my assertion." "I doubt it not," (replied his Lordship, rising from his seat) "but I am impatient to see my niece: I find she keeps her chamber.—She has done well in that respect, as it separates her from the society of that youth, whom her Father so imprudently chose, to make her companion."

"Your Niece, my Lord," cried the Father warmly, "could never receive prejudice from the society of Mr. de Montford.—Few young men, of his age, possess that virtue, and greatness of soul, which, give me leave to say, he does; or have acted so nobly, on every occasion."—Father Anthony laid a peculiar emphasis on the latter sentence. "Well, well," impatiently interrupted his Lordship, "no doubt, he also is a pattern of virtue, and goodness; but let him possess what virtues he will, I shall not chuse him, as a future companion for the Lady Elfrida de
de

de Clifford.—But, as you Churchmen are privileged persons, and you, no doubt, have visited her chamber, have the goodness to prepare her for a visit from me; as she may not choose, for many reasons, to leave her apartment.” As the Earl said this, he directed his eye to the picture of Montcalm, which was placed opposite to that of his wife, the Lady Julia. As his eye glanced on the portrait, the colour forsook his cheek.—His whole frame shook.—His limbs refused to support him.—Covering his face with both his hands, he gave an exclamation of horror, and sunk into the chair, against which he had leaned! “Your Lordship is unwell,” cried Anthony, advancing to assist him.—For some time he spoke not; but still keeping his hands in their former position, as anxious to hide from his eyes a hateful object; at last, at the Father’s repeated interrogatories, he looked up, and, pointing to the portraits; “It is those pictures,” cried the Earl, “that have unmanned me.—Let them be instantly removed.—Was this well

done of Clifford?" "My Lord!" cried Anthony, astonished and confounded. "Do you not hear me?" exclaimed the Earl angrily. "Let those portraits be taken from the apartment, I inhabit." "That portrait," cried Anthony, pointing to the Lady Julia's, "was your Wife's, the Countess of Mortagne's; and the other—" "Name it not," interrupted the Earl furiously; "too well I know whose it is."

"Would your Lordship wish both to be removed?" said the Father, as doubting what he had heard. "Wherefore are my orders thus disputed?" said the Earl. Then, as if recollecting himself, as Anthony was leaving the room; "you have mistaken me, Father" said he, in confusion: "let the Countess's remain."

Anthony, perplexed and confounded, at the Earl's visible disorder, and the strangeness of his different directions, left the room, to obey his commands, without presuming farther

farther reply. And, as he withdrew, his Lordship was under strong emotion.

Elfrida was greatly agitated, on hearing of the arrival of her Uncle; but commanding her internal sensations, she prepared herself to attend him.

Much she dreaded, that the Earl would insist on her leaving the Castle. The thought was dreadful; and she fancied, that retirement and solitude alone would sooth her sorrows. Perhaps, the thought of a separation from de Montford, (which she felt was inevitable, now that she was deprived of her Protector) added to her reluctance.

The prepossession, which she had suffered herself to form against her Uncle, did not give way on the sight of him. The Earl was tall, and of a commanding presence; but his features were harsh, and unpleasing; and his eye, which was dark, and seemed to pierce into the very inmost recesses of the soul,

made Elfrida shrink from their severe scrutiny.—His manners were proud, and imperious; and a dark gloom hung heavy on his brow. Such was the appearance of him, to whom now Elfrida was to look up as her Protector.—A deep sigh accompanied the reflection.

The Earl arose on her entrance; and, saluting her, led her to a sofa. For some moments, her emotions were too strong, to allow her to answer his inquiries. His lordship spoke with respect, and feeling, of the loss she had sustained; but hoped, he said, she would now consider him in the light of a Father; as it should be his endeavour to make her feel the loss of a real Parent, as little as possible.

Elfrida bowed her thanks; but spoke not. She well knew her Uncle meant, by this speech, to introduce her leaving the Castle; and that thought was too painful, to venture to speak upon.

To

To her infinite relief, de Montford now entered the room. It was the first of their meeting, since the death of the Baron.—He eagerly, though respectfully, advanced towards her; and, taking her hand, which, had he not been restrained by the presence of her Uncle, he would have pressed to his lips,—in a voice scarcely audible, from his feeling, he articulated some compliments, and enquiries respecting her health.

Elfrida essayed to speak; but could not. Her hand trembled, as she found it pressed between his. She was greatly fearful, lest her Uncle should perceive the tremor de Montford's presence excited; which added to her agitation. The Earl now, leaving his seat, placed himself by her.

“You have not, Niece,” said he, “inquired after your Cousins:—They are all impatient for my return; as I have promised them the company of Lady Elfrida de Clifford.”—This was rather too much for

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her.

her. "Oh! no, my Lord," said she with emotion; "Excuse me yet a while: indeed, indeed I cannot yet bring myself to think of leaving the seat of my Father.—When my grief is more subsided, perhaps, I may accept your kindness: But now, spare me, my Lord, till I am more myself."

"I should be unwilling," returned the Earl, "to make use of any kind of violence, to induce you to comply, with what only a moment's reflection must point out the propriety of."

As the Earl said this, he looked at de Montford.—They both felt the force of the remark. Edgar arose, with uneasiness manifested in his countenance, and walked to the farther end of the room: and Elfrida soon after, making some apologies to his Lordship concerning her health, which would not yet permit her to venture late hours, retired to her apartment.

The

The day following, the whole of the late Baron's family being assembled, the Earl read his Brother's will. It was a continuation of the good and beneficent acts of the Baron.

To de Montford he bequeathed the Estate in Norfolk, which his Lordship had before promised that youth, as producing one hundred pounds a year; but which, in reality, yielded the sum of forty more.

The Earl betrayed marks of surprise, and displeasure, when he came to this token of the Lord de Clifford's regard for Edgar.

"This is, in truth, Sir," cried he, addressing the youth, "a noble gift! My Brother, *indeed*, has proved himself a Friend to *you*."

Though no man could possess a heart, more susceptible of gratitude than de Montford, and softened, as he felt, at the recital
of

of his Benefactor's last testimony of his love; yet, did he feel hurt, and confused, at the Earl's address to him.

He was, (as has been before observed) of a high and warm temper; which, on some occasions, required all his good sense, to gain the mastery of.

Difficult was it, therefore, to subdue that passion, which was fast rising at his Lordship's manner. He, however, suppressed his feelings; and, turning to the Earl: "It is, indeed, my Lord," cried he, "a gift, worthy of the dear and noble Donor.—It was undeserved, unwished, by de Montford: and so deeply are my former obligations engraven on this heart, my Lord; that they required not this fresh remembrancer."

His Lordship, without reply, continued the will. To his aged Soldiers, who, supported by his bounty, felt not the wants incident to poverty, when accompanied by infirmity,

firmity, and loss of limbs, he left sufficient, to secure them from indigence or dependence.

Father Anthony was liberally rewarded, for his past services to the family, and his care of Edgar.

His Servants, and poor Tenants, all had reason to bless their generous Lord.

The residue of his money, and the Estates, of course, were left to the rightful Heir, the Lady Elfrida his Daughter, with a love and care, that accompanied the bequest; that denoted the feelings of a fond Parent, solicitous, beyond the grave, for the happiness of his darling Child.

The Earl, as he finished, appeared greatly dissatisfied with the Baron's will. "My Brother has disposed too largely of your fortune, Niece," cried his Lordship, when they were alone; vexation and anger imprinted
on

on his countenance.—“Living, as he has done, secluded from the world, he knew not the various wants that are annexed to high rank, with a title and honours to support.”

“My Lord,” cried Elfrida with animation, “forgive me, if I say, that any remarks to the prejudice of my beloved Father’s memory, are painful and displeasing. His Daughter would have found pleasure, in executing the will of so excellent a Parent, had it extended to the disposing away the half of her fortune: my Lord has only bequeathed to the truly deserving, what they merit at his hands.” She meant to include Edgar, as she would not trust herself with his name.

The day following was appointed for the interment of the Lord de Clifford. Greatly affecting was the last leave, that Elfrida took of her beloved Parent.—It almost overcame that fortitude, with which she had hitherto borne her loss.

The

The dreaded morn arrived; and, in the evening, the remains of the good and great de Clifford were deposited by the side of his ancestors.

The funeral, by the Earl's direction, was suitable to the high rank of the deceased.—The Earl attended as chief mourner.—After him followed de Montford,—next the Father; the Tenants and Servants following the aged Soldiers, finished the mournful cavalcade.

Edgar's grief was too deep for utterance. It was depicted on his countenance.—He mourned, as for a Friend and Father.

Father Anthony performed the last service to his Patron; and closed the sad ceremony, with a beautiful eulogium on the various merits of the deceased.

Respect and awe alone restrained the grief of the mourning auditors, within any bounds.

The

The service over, the sad procession returned to the Castle; where the day was finished, in talking over the virtues of the good Baron. The Soldiers took up the theme, and recounted the warlike exploits of their brave Commander.—Each dependant had some anecdote to relate, that redounded to the honour of their late, and much-lamented Lord.

CHAP. X.

THE night now grew dark, and gloomy, when de Montford, whose feelings were wrought up, almost to a pitch of despair, left the Castle, more freely to indulge his

his grief. He sought the grove; and, having gained the end of it, he seated himself on the stone-bridge, which crossed the river, and gave a loose to his sorrowful reflections.

The afflicting thought of his unfriended situation struck him forcibly; no claim could he lay to the friendship or protection of any. His *hopeless* passion, and the separation that was soon to ensue, from all he held most dear, with the mortifying thought, that some happier man would possess the object of his secret adoration, unmanned him quite; and he burst into tears.

Finding the keenness of his sorrow abated, as he gave this vent to his griefs, he threw himself on the earth, and poured forth a prayer to Heaven, for the happiness of the fair Orphan of the Castle, and for the repose of his Benefactor's soul; beseeching Heaven to endue him with fortitude, to bear, with firmness, whatever trials it might be pleased to inflict upon him.

He

He now arose from off the ground; and found his passions calmed. He again seated himself on the Bridge, and continued, for some time, musing. The Moon, now and then, gave a faint glimmering light; then, suddenly immersing behind a thick Cloud, left the landscape dark and comfortless.

It was a night calculated for his feelings; and the dreary stillness that reigned around, and which alone was interrupted by the melancholy hootings of the owl, and the hoarse shrieks of the bat,—joined to the scene he had that day been a spectator of,—filled his mind with a degree of romantic horror.

He felt, he wished, he knew not what.—His pulse beat high; he scarcely breathed; and his bosom filled with unusual emotion: when his attention was roused by a deep sigh. He started;—he fancied it might be the sighing of the surrounding trees, portending a storm.—'Twas repeated: he crossed himself.—Again it assailed his ears: a fear unknown to him before, pervaded his breast.

The

The recollection of the tales he had heard, of the grove's being inhabited, appalled his heart. He recommended himself to the protection of Heaven; and arose, uncertain whether to quit the place, or to stay, and wait what might ensue. A secret impulse prompted him to the latter; and, in an attitude of breathless expectation, he stood waiting what he was to encounter. When a small blue flame appeared, and shewed to his astonishment the figure of a man in complete armour.—His mien was regal; and his vizor being up, shewed a face, though pale and wan, that bore the traces of manly beauty.

The Spectre waved its hand.—“In me,” he cried, “behold the Duke of Clarence.—Be the conqueror of Buchan; and in France thou shalt know the real authors of thy birth.”—It vanished.—Cold drops of sweat stood on the brow of Edgar.—His respiration ceased.—It was the weakness of human nature, when in the presence of a superior Being, that conquered his usual firmness of soul.

In

In a few minutes, he revived; recovered his former courage, and prayed, with fervor, to Heaven to support him, in what seemed required of him to perform.

Reflections crowded thick upon his imagination. "Am not I then," cried he, "the son of de Montford? or, if I am, why am *I* called upon, to be the avenger of Clarence? Some mighty mystery hangs about my birth, that only by the death of Buchan can be disclosed to me. Perhaps—But no, it cannot be: banished must be such flattering suggestions from this breast. Wonderful are thy ways, Gracious Heaven," continued he, crossing himself with devotion; "and to thy guidance I commit myself."

Hope seemed to reanimate his breast.—
"I will to France," exclaimed he: "and here I swear, brave Clarence, to revenge thy death, or fall in the attempt."

He now turned his steps towards home: nor was he displeased to meet, at the end of
the

the Grove, Father Anthony ; who, solicitous for the youth, had in vain searched the Castle for him.

“ Wherefore, my son,” said the holy man, “ do I find you, at this late hour, in the Grove ?” “ Oh ! Father,” cried Edgar ; “ I have much to impart to your private ear : at present, the time will not allow.—How left you the Lady Elfrida ?” “ Tolerably resigned, my son.—But you have much awakened my curiosity.” “ Ask me not now, I beseech you Father : to night I will tell you all.” They then entered the Castle ; and soon after were called to supper.

The Father observed, that, besides the concern painted in the countenance of Edgar, for the irreparable loss they had all sustained, there was a degree of absence in his manners ; unusual to him, which doubled his impatience to know what the youth had to relate ; as he doubted not that it bore some relation to the cause of this change in his appearance.

appearance. Anxiously, therefore, he awaited the hour of retirement.

At length the Earl gratified his impatience, by quitting the table, soon after the removal of the cloth. De Montford, as soon as the Earl had withdrawn, followed Anthony to his chamber, for greater privacy; and there related to him the solemn scene, he had that night witnessed. The Father heard the youth's narration, with awful astonishment; and frequently he crossed himself, with devotion, during the recital.

“Praise be to God for all things, my son,” cried he, when Edgar had finished.—“It is, without doubt, for some great end, that you are selected, in this wonderful manner, to avenge the death of this Prince.—Much am I deceived, if you are not intimately connected with the house of Lancaster.—I cannot believe you descended from Sir Philip.” De Montford arose with emotion —“Ah! rather crush in your pupil, Father, such presumptuous

sumptuous hopes; lest they make me forget how low I am."

"Perhaps, it is my mother that will be restored to me, through the death of this Scottish Earl.—Yet, wherefore—(he paused) why do I perplex myself to unravel, what time alone can reveal? But tell me, Father, wherefore do you doubt my being the son of de Montford?"

"It is Philip, my son," cried the Father, "that has, long since, raised my doubts of your being the son of his late master."—"Does Philip, then, doubt it? Ah! Father, tell me, I beseech thee, from what circumstance?"

Anthony, then, related to the astonished youth the conversation, that had passed between him and Philip, respecting his birth. "Ah! Father," cried de Montford, with increased emotion, "tell me, by the regard you bear me, what are the conclusions you

would have me draw, from this coincidence of circumstances?"

Without for some time, giving any reply, Anthony continued musing deeply; weighing in his mind, what had been related to him.—At last, turning towards the youth; "The appearance," cried he, "of a Duke of Royal blood, who calls upon you to revenge his death, his seeming interest, and promise, in your favor, proclaim you to be of no plebian race." The Father paused.—"Proceed Father, I conjure you," exclaimed Edgar, in an agony of impatience.

"Joined," continued the Father, "to the extreme likeness, you bear to the house of Lancaster, makes me sometimes fancy you to be—" Again the Father hesitated—"Almighty God!" cried Edgar, (whose feelings were wrought up to the highest pitch of impatience) "and can you now Father leave me, in this cruel perplexity? Speak to me; acquaint

acquaint me, I entreat you, whose son you suppose me to be."

Anthony hesitated a second or two.—But thinking he had gone too far now to recede, he seized the light, which burnt on the table, and, taking the youth by the hand, he led him, in silent wonder, to the gallery of pictures; where, placing him immediately opposite two, which hung together, representing the Battle of Baugé,—he pointed to the figure of Clarence. "View that Hero," cried Anthony, in a solemn tone of voice; "know you any one, whom he resembles?" "I do, Father;—myself I almost fancy, in the form of Clarence.—But wherefore this?"—"Then, as much as I believe the holy tenets of our mother Church, I believe you to be that Hero's son."

The colour mounted to the cheek of Edgar: he trembled with the excess of his emotion. Then, laying his hand to his heart, he lifted up his eyes to Heaven. "Ah! if I

am not," exclaimed he, "why does the bare
furnise alone raise such tumults in my soul?
It must be so: or wherefore so often have I
almost been agonized, by seeing the mur-
derous arm of Buchan uplifted, ready to give
the assassins stroke? I am no coward; nor
can it be the resemblance alone it bears of
me, that makes me tremble, as I view the
death devoted Hero, unconscious of his dan-
ger. Turn, have I often, when a boy cried,
turn brave Clarence, and see the deadly
stroke, that's aiming at thee."

"Let us pass on to the next," continued
the youth, his whole countenance and form
becoming beyond description animated.—
"View there, Father, the coward Scot, who
dares not face the gallant youth; but meanly
gives the blow, whilst his victorious arm is
giving death to his other opponant.—The
colour flies from his valiant cheek.—His face
is distorted with pain.—Death hovers before
his eyes.—Revenge seems, for a moment, to
stop its devouring hand.—A milder passion

NOW

now dispels the former.—The weapon drops from his hand.—His limbs no more support him.—He sinks--he falls!"

"Father, I am not well: let us from this scene of horror." Anthony, moved at the youth's emotion, led him to his chamber: where, after some minutes, finding him more composed, he renewed the subject. He advised him to forbear, at any time, letting fall the most distant hint, or expression, from whom, he apprehended, he derived his birth, "as having no proofs to enforce your suspicions, my son," continued Anthony, "but mere conjecture, from strange concurrent circumstances, you may subject yourself to scorn and derision. Leave all, therefore, to that Providence, who, by placing you under the guardianship of the best of men, shews that, from your birth, you have been its peculiar care.

"Alas!" cried Edgar, "better it were, never to have indulged the flattering hope:

bitter disappointment may be my portion, from having raised my expectations so high. Join with me, Father, rather in subduing the ambition, which already has disordered my better reason, than, by adding your arguments in my favor, strengthen it. I would forget all but my promise; which were I not to remember, I should forget my duty."

"Worthy noble youth!" cried Anthony: "Worthy, indeed, art thou to enjoy all honours, that this world can bestow. Nor need I join you in arguments, against your indulging the grateful idea, that your birth is noble. Great minds become more elevated, by the gifts of fortune. Little minds only forget their duties, amidst the blaze of sublunary advantages."

De Montford, now emboldened by the sanction the Father gave his hopes, imparted to him his passion for the Lady Elfrida. On which Anthony, smiling, told him, that, though he thanked him for the confidence he placed

placed in him, yet he had not made him the wiser by the information. The youth blushed and looked confused. "Do not be alarmed, my son; whoever has observed the love you bear for the most excellent, as well as the most lovely of her sex, must, at the same time, have observed the internal struggle, that has been betwixt your honour and love: and to your everlasting renown be it remembered, that the former never was forgotten by de Montford."

They then parted for the night; and Edgar retired to his chamber. The pleasing and rapturous thought, that it was now no longer a crime to love Elfrida, kept him waking the chief part of the night. At last, sleep closed his eyes; but the images of the preceding day disturbed his rest too much, to feel himself much refreshed by his slumbers.

As soon, almost, as day appeared, he arose; and had scarcely finished dressing, before the

Father tapped at his door. "I have been thinking, my son," said the good man, (after the morning salutations had passed between them) "that the evidence of Philip, should you discover your supposed mother, may be of much service." De Montford was pleased at the hint: and the Father and he spent some time, in consulting on the best methods, to divert Philip from his intention of accompanying him abroad; as his age and infirmities ill suited the hardships, he might have to encounter in a long campaign; and Edgar, besides the loss of a faithful and valued domestic, might, also, lose a witness of some consequence.

The Earl treated de Montford with a kind of haughty and forced civility; and de Montford, though he deeply felt his behaviour, forbore shewing any marks of resentment, from the respect he entertained towards so near a relative of the house of de Clifford.— He felt angry and displeased with that youth, for the large bequest he enjoyed, from the munificent

munificent temper of his benefactor. His Lordship considered it, as an injury done to his son Graham; whom he proposed and expected to see, one day, Lord of de Clifford Castle.

A few days after the interment of the Baron, the Earl sent for Edgar. "I find, young man," said he, addressing the youth, "that it is your intention to embrace the profession of arms." "It is, my Lord." "To whom are you recommended?" To the valiant Earl of Salisbury." "You stay at the Castle, then, till the arrival of the Earl?" "It was my Patron's wish, my Lord."—"Well, Sir, if I can be of any service to you, for the sake of my Brother, and you continue to deserve being countenanced, you may depend on me." Rising passion stained the visage of Edgar with a crimson glow: but, stifling his indignation, he only bowed; and with an air, not of that humble kind, which the Earl thought only became him, he inquired if his Lordship had any farther com-

H 5

mands,

mands,—or inquiries to make, in which he could satisfy him. And, having understood he had not, he again bowed, and withdrew; leaving the Earl much surpris'd, that not all his pride and power could awe, or prevent a youth of uncertain fortunes; a mere creature, as he considered, of his Brother's bounty, from supporting, in his presence, a degree of manly freedom, which his Lordship had little opportunity of witnessing, from any but his superiors before.

When the Earl had finally settled the affairs of his Brother, he grew impatient for his return to his family.

Elfrida, for the first time, since the decease of her Father, now made her appearance at dinner. Her mourning habit heightened the usual brilliancy of her charms.—His Lordship seemed much struck, with the extreme loveliness of his niece: when an uneasy sensation arose, at the thought of the numerous rivals, his son would have to encounter,

ter, when such charms were presented to the world.

Having, for some time, examined her, with painful admiration, whilst de Montford's raptures, and satisfaction, at again beholding her at Table, and viewing her increased charms, could scarcely be restrained within any bounds of moderation; the Earl, turning to her, inquired, if, on the day succeeding the morrow, she would hold herself in readiness to return with him. Elfrida trembled, and turned pale.—She tried to give an assent; but dared not trust her voice: casting her eyes on Edgar, she found his fixed upon her, with an expression, very different from that which had appeared in them, on her entrance. In confusion, she turned her's towards the ground; fearful of encountering the stern and scrutinizing eye of her Uncle, who liked not the observation, he was forced to make to himself, that his niece was in more danger, whilst in the retirement.

of de Clifford Castle, than surrounded, at a Court, by numerous admirers.

The evening preceding her departure, when the Earl and Father Anthony had withdrawn; Elfrida found herself, for the first time, since the death of her Father, alone with Edgar.—They both felt their situation.

De Montford's breast seemed labouring, with a something he wished to reveal; yet seemed irresolute, whether or not to divulge it.—Sometimes gazing upon her, with tender earnestness, as if going to address her;—then, suddenly turning away, appeared as if he check'd his intentions.

Elfrida's situation grew insupportable; and she arose to leave the room. “Ah! Lady Elfrida,” cried the youth, detaining her, “why so anxious to leave one, you once allowed to call you friend, when so soon he will be deprived of your company? Alas! Perhaps, the pleasures of a Court will quickly
enough

enough obliterate the remembrance of those scenes of tranquil delight, which we have so often enjoyed together." "I was in hopes, de Montford," returned she, "that you had entertained a different opinion of me, than what I have reason to conclude, from such a speech.—You have little cause, Edgar, to think so ill of my heart." "Ah! forgive me, Elfrida: forgive the distraction of a man, who, in the thoughts of losing all he holds most dear, knows not what he utters.

And will you, then, sometimes, amidst the crowd of surrounding admirers, deign to remember the companion of your youth? Will Elfrida sometimes think on the pleasant hours that have passed, when rambling, with her happy friend, through the walks of the Castle? Will the envied Being, whom she blesses with her hand, be jealous of such remembrance, when kingdoms separate us, or wished-for death? Oh! Elfrida, may you be happy, whatever becomes of the wretched Edgar!" Grief stopped his speech; he
turned

turned from her. Elfrida felt greatly disordered.—His words, his pale and trembling frame, that seemed almost convulsed with his emotions, softened her heart. Never before had she seen him so deeply affected.—She wished to give him comfort, without discovering her inclinations.

“De Montford,” said she, in a voice of soothing tenderness, “wherefore will you call yourself wretched, and unhappy? You know not how you wound your *Friend*, your *Sister*, by it.” “It was unnecessary, Lady Elfrida,” (cried de Montford, gazing on her with a reproachful air) “at such a time as this, to remind me of my duty. It is the last time you could be troubled with the subject. Unhappy I must call myself: my peace is forever destroyed; uncertain as I am, how soon another may be in possession of those charms.—But yet, more fatal to my peace that excellence of mind; which long, in secret have I adored; and for which I have so often sighed. Forgive me what I have uttered.

tered. Long, vainly have I struggled with my unhappy presumptuous passion; till the prospect of your immediate departure, and the thought, (distracting one) that soon some envied Being will possess your affection, unmanned me. Yet, all I ask, or dare to hope for, is your pity, and forgiveness."

"I do forgive you, de Montford," cried Elfrida, much affected: "but give not way thus to a passion, so fatal to your peace."—"And can you, then, forgive my boldness, Elfrida? Do you pity, and not hate, the wretched Edgar? Yet ask me not to banish this passion from my breast.—Never can Elfrida's image be effaced, till the death I fly to, when *she* becomes another's, obliterate the dear impression. Ah! Elfrida, may the man you bless with your affections, love you but as Edgar does; and you will be truly happy." Elfrida sighed. "But I see I affect you: forget my distress, and never let the thought of what I suffer, disturb your tranquillity. Ah! may you never feel what I do.

I do. Let me again entreat your pardon, (seeing the tears, which she vainly strove to check, force their way down her cheek) for the pain I have given that tender generous bosom. I will no more affect you. Let me now bid you adieu, to-morrow I cannot."

He took her passive hand. "Adieu Elfrida—Too lovely generous maid, adieu.—Think sometimes on your absent friend." His emotion became violent; and passionately kissing her hand, he hastily broke from her, and was leaving the room.—When Elfrida, whose resolution failed her, on beholding his distress, falteringly cried: "And can you leave me, de Montford, pained as you see me? Promise me, ere you go, to preserve, with care, a life so dear." She paused with tears and blushes.

"Say, dearest Elfrida," (exclaimed the youth returning, joy brightening his face) "say to whom is the existence of de
Montford

Montford precious? Ah! if I thought—he stopped.

Recovering somewhat her presence of mind, “To all your friends, Edgar,” cried she. His countenance fell.—His hopes vanished.—Then, casting on her a look of love and reproach; “Cruel Elfrida.—But I deserve this disappointment, bitter as it is.—Presumptuous that I was, to suppose that more than friendship actuated your care.—It is for Elfrida alone I would wish to live; and, when she becomes another’s, it is then, that Edgar would wish to bury his sorrows in the grave.”

“Hear me, de Montford,” cried she, deeply blushing, “and, if it will contribute to your happiness, Elfrida will not, shall not marry any, but him her Father has selected for her husband, in case he prove himself worthy, by his actions, to become his son.” “Oh, God of Heaven!” cried Edgar, almost frantic, “is this, then, your consolation?”

tion? And can you tell me you are bequeathed to another, at the moment you view the agonies, you yourself have caused? Barbarous, cruel Elfrida! Why did you call me back? That was, indeed, a refinement in cruelty." "You upbraid me, Edgar, without reason. How little do I deserve it from you!"

"Did you not, Elfrida, tell me, that you would reserve your hand for him, whom your Father had selected for your husband? When he, blessed as he is above mortals, should prove himself, by some gallant action, to be worthy of you? Ah! who would not soar above humanity, for such a prize! Did you not tell me this, inhuman that you are?" "I did:—but severely would you condemn yourself, for these undeserved reproaches, if you knew all." "Think you, then, the knowledge has added to my tranquillity, or contributed to my happiness, as you seemed to expect it should? Alas! Elfrida, you little know, what it is to feel as I do, when you can suppose it, however amiable may be the object."

"Perhaps,

"Perhaps, I can imagine your feelings, Edgar," said she, deeply blushing: "and, if you knew the person, you would not be displeased, that it is he who has taught me them."

"You surprise, as well as afflict me, Elfrida! For whom can you have entertained the sentiments, you hint at; sanctioned too by your Father?" "Ah! de Montford," cried Elfrida, casting down her eyes, "whether is your penetration fled? Think whom you most wish to see the husband of Elfrida," "Alas! how cruel this! Well, must you know, my presumptuous wishes would only fix on one—and he, but Ah! how little probable, that he should be the happy Being! You trifle with my feelings, Lady Elfrida. Tell me, I conjure you, by the friendship you profess for me, who it is; or, if you cannot name him, give me some hint, that I may discover this envied mortal!"

His

“His fortunes then are, at present, humble; but his merits great. Need I say more, *de Montford*?” cried she, averting her face. “O God!” exclaimed Edgar, “can it be possible? But yet, no it cannot be.” The youth was on his knees. “Tell me, I beseech you *Elfrida*, before I for ever incur your scorn, and contempt, for my presumption! Pronounce, in pity to my feelings, his name! It cannot be *Stafford*, nor the detested *Graham*, nor—” he named some other youths of quality, who had much admired *Elfrida*. “None of these answer your description; no. Ah! Edgar, ask me not.—Let me retire, I am not well.” “Impossible, you could not leave me, in this agony of suspense!” He had hold of her hand; his countenance expressing the variety of emotions, that agitated his breast. “Ah! in pity *Elfrida* relieve my anxiety!” Her hand trembled in his.—She found it pressed by him; and he had the transport to find, she gently returned the pressure; whilst she softly articulated the name of *de Montford*! The name had scarcely escaped

caped her lips, before she repented what she had done. A faint sickness came across her heart. He caught her in his arms. His ardor brought her to herself. Oh! Heavens! What have I said? She leaned her head upon his shoulder. He supported the lovely burthen, for some moments, in speechless rapture.

“And do you then, love the happy Edgar?” cried he, gazing on her, with unutterable transport: “Dearest generous lovely maid!” “Can you now doubt it, de Montford?” cried she, hiding her blushing face. “Ah no! My joy is, indeed, complete!” He pressed her to his breast, and imprinted a kiss on her beauteous cheek. “Forgive me, Elfrida, my bliss makes me mad! Ah! who would not be so? To be so blessed? Happy, happy Edgar!”

Elfrida now, more recovered, strove to disengage herself from his arms. “Think not, Elfrida,” cried the youth, “that I shall
let

let you free, till I have punished you, for the pangs you have made me suffer." Then, folding her again in his arms, he imprinted some ardent kisses on her glowing cheeks.— Never had he before experienced a moment of such happiness. She broke from him in confusion. "This, then, is the way you teach me to be more reserved with you Sir." "Do not be offended, Elfrida," (cried the youth, taking her hand respectfully) "consider what have been my sufferings, and then wonder, if you can, that my joy should make me forget myself."

He was not, however, contented, 'till he brought her to acknowledge, that she had, for many years, equally suffered with himself, from what they both feared would have proved a hopeless passion. What gratitude and delight did he experience, as she related to him the conversation, she had held with her Father respecting him! How did his bosom swell with gratitude to his Benefactor! "Never," cried de Montford, "can I repay such

an instance of exalted generosity, but by each hour contributing to the happiness of my adored Elfrida! Ah! what a stimulation to glory! Yes, my friend, my Father, thy Edgar shall, in the service he has chosen, raise himself a name, that shall not disgrace de Clifford's. Never shalt thou repent thy noble preference."

The lovers were now interrupted: and Elfrida retired to her chamber, with a beating heart. She knew not, whether to condemn, or to applaud herself, for having confessed to Edgar the sentiments she felt for him. But, when she reflected on his long hopeless passion, his noble concealment of it, and the absence that would soon take place, she could not condemn herself. Besides, it made him happy; and that consoled her for letting her secret escape, before time had proved he merited her. De Montford had generously refused her taking any vow of fidelity to him; though he on his part, took a solemn one to that purpose.

As

As to Edgar, nothing could exceed his transports.—He sought the Father, and solicited his congratulations. That good man participated in the felicity of his pupil, but cautioned him against the Earl. “I would advise the Lady Elfrida,” said he, “to be careful how she lets fall the most distant hint of her Father’s intentions; as, by exciting the Earl’s suspicions, it may prove the means of rendering her minority unhappy. Curb therefore, my son, this excess of joy, on her account.” De Montford accorded with the sentiments of the Father; and promised to restrain his happiness from being visible.—How happy was old Philip, when he saw, by the countenance of his young master, that the heavy gloom, which for some time had hung upon it, was changed to smiles of pleasure!”

It was with some difficulty, that de Montford, and the Father, made that faithful domestic relinquish his intentions of accompanying his master to France: and the only argument

argument that had weight with him, was Edgar's declaring, that his presence was required to superintend the Castle, which the Baron had bequeathed him in Norfolk.

The morning now arrived, that Elfrida so much dreaded.—It was the morning of her departure. Sleepless had she passed the long tedious night. It was the last she should for some years pass, under the same roof with de Montford. The chances of war were various, and uncertain. She shuddered at the thought, that, perhaps, she might never see him more. The thought destroyed all her heroism. “Ah! why,” cried she, “was my Father so desirous of his bearing arms? But it was his will, and the wish of Edgar.” She tried to convince herself it was right; but her tender nature revolted against it. At last, day appearing, she arose, and dressed herself for her journey.

In passing the chamber of her Father, she changed colour. She lean'd against Ellen

for support.—Tears came to her relief. She tried to summon up her fortitude. She knew she should have occasion for it. Lifting up her eyes to Heaven, “O may your daughter,” cried she, “act worthy of the representative of thy noble house! May she act worthy of the daughter of de Clifford!” Ellen, apprehensive that she would grow too much affected, hurried her along.

Elfrida, early in the morning had sent, by Ellen, her picture, to de Montford. What delight did this present afford him! It was a proof of Elfrida’s high confidence in him. “O that my actions may entitle me to the lovely original!” exclaimed he, pressing it with transport to his bosom.

Tender and affecting was the leave she took of Father Anthony. “My friend, my monitor,” cried she, “how greatly I shall miss you! But promise me Father, never to forsake your Child; be ever to her, what you have hitherto been, the friendly guide of my youth.”

youth." "I promise you my latest services, my Child," returned the good man, tears stealing down his reverend cheeks. "Bless you, bless you, Lady! may Heaven preserve the daughter of my beloved Patron!" Elfrida presented him her cheek: Anthony respectfully saluted her, and bestowed his benediction. She gave her Hand to Edgar. Neither of them could speak. He pressed it with emotion, to his lips. She found her spirits begin to leave her. She trembled, and grew pale. She prayed to Heaven, with fervor, to support her in this trying scene; that her Uncle might not see, how greatly the parting wounded her. She turned from him, to receive the lamentations and prayers of her tenants, servants, and the poor.—Each individual was noticed, either by her bounty, or commendation. The scene grew too affecting.—She gave her hand to the Earl: and soon the lamentations of the weeping multitude were felt, but no longer heard, by Elfrida.

CHAP. XI.

EDGAR bore the departure of Elfrida, with a firmness to himself, almost surprising; and, giving the last look, he turned towards the Castle. How was it changed, within a few short weeks! No more could he listen, with reverence and delight, to the sage counsels, and animating accounts, which his beloved Benefactor would often give, of what had passed in his early youth. No more would his breast become fired with enthusiasm, as the Baron would expatiate on the warlike merits of the gallant Henry, and his

his Royal Brothers; their great achievements in war. No more could he be delighted with the sight of the fair Elfrida, nor listen to her enchanting voice, whilst she would hang on his arm, as they rambled amidst the walks of the Castle; nor gaze on her beauteous face, whilst assisting in her studies. Each walk, each surrounding object, served to remind him of pleasures that were past.

The servants, sorrowful and sad, mourned their deceased Lord, and absent Lady.

De Montford fought the Cottagers. He would listen, with delight, whilst with guileless love, they would sing the praises of Elfrida, and recount numberless instances of her affability, and tenderness of disposition.

In the course of a few weeks, Edgar received the welcome summons, from Lord Salisbury to join him. Philip begged to accompany his young master to the metropo-

lis; which offer Edgar, with pleasure, accepted; as he wished for a companion when he left the Castle. De Montford took leave of his friends over night, as he was to set out by break of day. Many were the charges given him by Father Anthony; who loved the youth as his son. That good and holy man was to reside at his monastery, till Elfrida came of age; he then again was to officiate, as Confessor to her and her household. Having bestowed his benediction on our hero, he earnestly entreated him to acquaint him, by every opportunity in his power, with what befel him. They parted with tears on both sides, The good Father, embracing the youth, pressed him to his breast, whilst he poured forth prayers for his safe return. "Forget not, my son, your aged preceptor; your friend, that loves you as his Child." "Never never, Father," cried de Montford, "can Edgar's heart be capable of such black ingratitude: Never shall I forget, how much I owe your cares.

Continue

Continue Father to love me, though absent."

He shook hands with all the Servants; and to each, though reluctant to receive it, he made some present. They loaded him with good wishes, and blessings. It was the united wish of them all, they said, to see him return, the husband of their young Lady.—The heart of Edgar thanked them for the wish, though his voice could not.

Philip bustled about to conceal his concern: he thought it beneath a soldier, to betray any marks of weakness. He affected to talk of the pleasure it gave him, to see his master call'd to the field; where, he was certain, he should return from with honour: whilst he was often forced to break off his discourse, to wipe away the starting tear.

Early on the morrow, de Montford, accompanied by his faithful domestic, left de Clifford Castle. Sorrow filled his heart, on

casting the last glance at the mansion, which had, for so many years, been the boundary of his happiness. He stopped his horse, turning himself half round on his saddle, and resting his hand on it. He delivered himself up to his reflections, nor heeded he the neighing of his fiery courser; who, impatient to proceed, kept pawing the ground with his feet. Tender and pleasingly painful recollections crowded thick upon his mind, at this, perhaps, last view of the Castle. His eyes filled with tears.—For a moment, he forgot the glorious occasion, which called him forth, in the tender sorrow that filled his heart.

Philip, who did not experience these sensations, began to think it high time, to awaken his master from the reverie, in which he had been so long plunged, by reminding him of the lateness of the hour.

Asbamed of his weakness, and stifling his emotions, he gave a last look at the southern
part

part of the Castle, which contained the apartments of Elfrida; and, softly pronouncing a benediction on her loved name, he gave a spur to Bucephalus; and the Castle of de Clifford quickly vanished from the eye, though not from the heart of de Montford; who, proceeding directly onwards, late in the eve of the next day reached the Capital.

The Earl of Salisbury received our hero, with testimonies of welcome and esteem.—The high character given of him, by his friend the Lord de Clifford, ensured him a welcome reception. Notwithstanding the favorable opinion, the Earl had conceived of Edgar, he found his expectations infinitely surpassed, on the appearance of that youth. Greatly was he struck with his noble person, and captivating manners. After having assured him of his protection, and firm support, in the honourable profession which he had embraced; “my friend has not deceived me,” said he, “in teaching me to expect no common youth. Your character, noble Sir,

before I had the pleasure of seeing you, had secured my friendship and esteem: But the strong resemblance you bear to a dear departed friend, a Brother of mine, insures you a powerful interest in the heart of Salisbury. Unhappy Emmeline," continued the Earl, "such might have blessed thy widowed arms, and saved thee from an early grave; had fate permitted thy infant, to thy maternal cares."

During this apostrophe, the Earl had turned away from the youth: he recollected himself, and again addressed him.

Having made some inquiries of de Montford, respecting the nature of his studies, and being highly pleased with his answers, Lord Salisbury proceeded to inform him, that on the morrow's dawn he should leave England; that his troops were all embarked, and that he had taken leave of his Sovereign.

De Montford, who had modestly received the compliments, the Earl had bestowed on him,

him, ventured to express the high satisfaction, this intelligence afforded him; as he declared himself impatient to pursue the paths of glory.

“I doubt it not, young man,” said the General, smiling; and in the field I am mistaken, if I shall not have farther cause for admiration.”

The day following, the Earl and his young charge embarked for France. During their voyage, the amiable qualities which de Montford possessed, daily gained on the affections of Salisbury. The fourth day finished their voyage; and on the following eve, the General, with his troops, reached the army of the Regent; who had formed his encampment, within a few miles of Verneuil.

Lord Salisbury would have presented Edgar to the Duke; but thanking the Earl for the offer, he declined it. “I would wish, my Lord,” said he, “to render myself wor-

thy of the notice of that great Prince, before such a youth as I, am presented to his observation. Haply in the field, if fortune favor me, I shall secure the esteem of my noble Patron, and acquire the notice of the Duke." "Brave youth," (cried Salisbury, grasping his hand) "already art thou a warrior; and that high courage, which sparkles in your eye, will soon proclaim the gallant heart, that fires it."

The Earl of Douglas, with his Son in law the Earl of Buchan, commanded the French army. How did the sight of Buchan inflame the heart of our hero, with a desire of revenging the death of the gallant Clarence!

The French troops consisted of twenty thousand men, headed by most of the nobility, that adhered to the Dauphin. Though in point of numbers, Douglas had the advantage of Bedford, (the English army barely consisting of thirteen thousand) yet these were chosen veterans, trained up under the
auspices

auspices of the warlike Henry ; and now under the command of Bedford, and Salisbury, two of the greatest Generals Europe ever had known, they might well be considered as more than a match for the enemy's superiority of number.

Each day did de Montford more and more win on the heart of his General. Few, indeed, could behold that youth with indifference. He suffered not his passion for Elfrida to soften or enervate his mind ; but rather to give vigor to his ambition of proving himself worthy of gaining her hand, by signalizing himself in battle.

One morning, as he was receiving instructions from Lord Salisbury, in his tent, the Duke of Bedford entered. Seeing Edgar he started, and looked surprised.

De Montford arose from his seat, and, bowing respectfully, would have withdrawn : but motioning with his hand for him to stay,
Edgar

Edgar retired to the farther end of the tent, his eyes modestly bent to the ground.

“Who is this youth, my Lord,” cried the Duke, “that I find with you? His appearance bespeaks him of noble parentage.”

He is the son of Sir Philip de Montford, my Lord;” replied the Earl. “He had the misfortune, in his infancy, to lose his Father in battle; but, being so fortunate, as to be left to the protection of a valued friend of mine, the Lord de Clifford, he has not felt the want of a Father’s care.—To me, as a valuable legacy, has he bequeathed him.”—Edgar’s eyes bore testimony to the truth of what Salisbury had said, of his Benefactor’s goodness to him. “I knew the Baron,” said his Grace, “when I was a boy: and this instance of his worth adds to the esteem, I always entertained for him. We must join in promoting the fortunes of his Portegée, from respect to his memory. But wherefore, my Lord, did you not introduce your charge, amongst

amongst those youths, you yesterday presented, as having joined our cause? His appearance pleases me much; and I am much mistaken, if he is not well worthy of our notice." "Your Highness has not judged too favorably," cried Lord Salisbury, "for no praise can exceed, what my late friend says of him. It was at his own request, that I did not confer that honour on him; he wishing alone by his actions, to obtain your notice." The Regent eyed de Montford, with a look of peculiar complacency and regard: and, as he suffered him to depart, he praised him for his noble sentiments; and promised not to forget him.

As soon as he was withdrawn—"I much admire the spirit of this de Montford of yours, my Lord of Salisbury" exclaimed the Duke, "and there is a something in his manners, and appearance, that interests me greatly." Salisbury listened, with pleasure, to the favorable opinion; the Regent had conceived
of

of his charge; and joined, with enthusiasm, in his praises.

Bedford now changed the discourse, to the subject he came upon, the present situation of his army; and settled to march the next morning, within sight of the enemy.—And great part of that night was spent, in making preparations for their approaching march, and arranging every thing for battle.

De Montford was not idle, during these warlike preparations: A band of youthful warriors, whom Salisbury had given him the command of, employed his utmost care and attention. “My friends, and dear companions,” said he, though unexperienced in war, “let us convince our enemies, by our courage and valor, what a band of English youths can do, when armed by the love of their King and Country; and by our bravery supply the deficiency of our skill.”

“Let them see, we have not forgot the example of our Fathers; who, fighting under

der the banners of the warlike Henry, spread terror and consternation, throughout their army." Thus did he endeavour to inspire into their hearts a noble emulation, to imitate the conduct of their brave ancestors.

The British army, by the direction of the Regent, halted, when they had got within a league of the enemy's camp. A Herald was sent to the army of Douglas, with defiance. Bedford, in merry guise, sent a message, importing to Douglas, that he would come and dine with him. Douglas answered the message, by replying, that the English General should be welcome, and should find the cloth ready laid.

The Duke smiled at the answer; but, instead of proceeding to the attack, he pitched his men upon a convenient spot, for a field of battle.

Aymen, Count of Narbonne, a hot-headed and head-strong young man, and one of the
French

French Generals, disapproved of the advice which Douglas gave; who, having in person observed the advantageous situation of the Regent, upon assembling a council of war, represented the manifest disadvantage, which their army would suffer, in hazarding a battle; and gave his advice to postpone it.

The Earl of Buchan his son, and Constable of France, with all the experienced Officers, approved the salutary counsel of Douglas.—But Aymen, spurning a proposal, which to his imagination appeared the effect of timidity, considering their superiority in number, and flaming with rash zeal, to signalize his courage, though at the expence of his Country's blood, rushed from the council, followed by the young and unexperienced nobility, exclaiming, “ Let those who love their King, follow me.”

Douglas and Buchan, with grief and indignation, saw their counsel neglected, and their authority despised. But actuated by
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the noblest principle, they determined, tho' with the most dreadful presages of the fate that awaited them, to give every support to their rash unthinking associates; and, by exerting their united endeavours, if possible, to save them; or, if ineffectual, (which they foresaw would be the case) to wash out, with their blood, the stain, which had been cast upon their honour.

With this heroic resolution, they endeavoured to form their troops: but, through the misconduct of Narbonne, who, with his rash associates, had already begun their career, the remainder of the army following in a tumultuous manner, all the efforts of the two Generals proved ineffectual; nor could they reduce their men to any rank, or discipline whatever. Thus, giving up every hope, they marched along, with the multitude, portending their fated overthrow; sometimes endeavouring to make them halt, to recover breath, before they should engage. They, however, disregarded their Chief's advice;

advice; and seemed determined on their own destruction.

This rashness was a piece of good fortune, that the Regent's most sanguine wishes could not have proposed, more to his advantage; and he instantaneously prepared his men, to meet their rash foes.

Edgar in complete armour, the device on his arms, a star shooting forth its rays from beneath a cloud, bearing the motto, '*Time will discover all*,' with his chosen band, marched by the side of Salisbury; his heart beating high, with youthful ardor, to signalize himself in the field; beseeching Heaven to give him an opportunity of distinguishing himself in battle.

"Ah! my Lord," cried he to Lord Salisbury, on beholding Buchan, "this is the man, to whom the gallant Duke of Clarence owes his death. How often have I wished to revenge it! Would that this arm may
prove

prove the means ! Fain would I so flesh my maiden sword !” Salisbury looked astonished. He attentively viewed the countenance of the youth, as he was speaking ; and saw it glow with martial fire. Apprehensive of de Montford’s engaging with so experienced a Chief, he looked grave. “ Edgar,” said he, “ no prejudice should influence a soldier, in the field.—The chance of war was in favor of Buchan ; and he profited by it.—It was his duty.—Wherefore you should seek to revenge the cause of that ill fated hero, I own, surprises me.—It is his friend, whom most the Scottish Earl has injured : It is Salisbury, who should avenge his Clarence.” The Earl sighed. “ But, in the public cause, it is my duty, to throw aside all private quarrel : and deeply should I blush for my young friend, were I to find, he reserved himself in the field, to accomplish a revenge.”

The colour mounted to the cheeks of de Montford. “ My Lord,” cried he with animation, “ I hope, ere night, you will be convinced,

convinced, your suspicions wrong me.—No, though much I wish to encounter the General, I spurn the thought of shunning danger, even to meet him.—If fortune favor my wishes, we meet.” He ceased; and the Earl, seizing his hand; “Brave boy,” cried he, how do you hourly rise in my esteem! I did not doubt you, de Montford; my fears for you alone influenced me: Buchan is an experienced Chief; a braver soldier, I am sure, he is not, than my charge.—Be advised; meet him not, my son: many will be the opportunities given you, of signaling yourself, without rushing into unnecessary danger; into certain destruction.”—The youth, as he could not assign his reasons for wishing to encounter the Earl, forbore reply: but the danger, which Salisbury had so strongly painted, only made him more emulous of the glory, of conquering such a renowned Chieftain. He, however, felt pleased, that the Earl had not suspected his courage.

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By this time, the two armies were engaged; and the battle raged, with violence, on both sides.

None more distinguished themselves, in the engagement, than our hero. Several times he rallied his men, when their ranks were broken, by the devouring cannon; and brought them back to their charge. He performed miracles of valor with them; and was humanely instrumental in saving many troops, from being cut to pieces; as he stopped the pursuit, till they had time to rally, and renew the attack.

Salisbury surveyed the youth, with admiration. His commanding air, and martial dignity of his person, the animated fire which sparkled in his countenance, united with the extreme resemblance, he bore to the house of Lancaster, struck him with astonishment. "So have I seen the Royal Brothers look," cried the Earl; "so have I seen them act, when thus engaged against their foes."

His

His uncommon bravery escaped not the notice of Bedford; who viewed him with surprise, and determined, such deeds of valor should not pass unrewarded.

For several hours, the action was doubtful; as the French had charged with an incredible impetuosity, which had disordered one of the wings of the English: whilst, in return, the English archers received them, with a most terrible discharge, and put to flight one division.

Now the battle raged, with horrid violence; and neither still could claim advantage.—When Salisbury, heading a large party of reserve, with de Montford at his left, fell upon the Scots; and, by this manœuvre, decided the fortune of the day.

Edgar now watched an opportunity of engaging Earl Buchan. He found him in the hottest part of the battle; where he was animating his disheartened troops, by his brave example.

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"Let me now," cried the youth, advancing to the Scottish General, "Let me now avenge the death of Clarence." Surprised at this speech, Earl Buchan turned towards the youth, and surveyed him with marks of astonishment, and contempt. "Presumptuous boy," cried he, "receive the reward, due to thy temerity, in daring to engage Earl Buchan." So saying, he aimed a blow, with his truncheon, that would inevitably have terminated the existence of our hero, had he received it on the part intended: but, by a fortunate change of position, he escaped the meditated death. With equal fury he returned the blow, with his battle axe, and sorely wounded the Earl on his left side.—Enraged to receive such a wound from a stripling, the Earl now levelled his truncheon, with all his might, at the head of his young antagonist, determining, by its force, to finish his career.

De Montford had no way of escaping the deathful stroke, but by trusting to the strength

of his shield.—Covering himself, therefore, with it, he received the dreadful blow; which almost crushed to atoms his uplifted arm, that now dropt useless by his side; whilst the massy shield rebounded, with the violence of the stroke.

The effusion of blood caused a momentary faintness to overspread the frame of Edgar: but, summoning up his remaining strength, he drew the sword of de Clifford; and, before the Earl could recover his strength, (which was much spent, in the furious blow he had given de Montford) he clove the head of the Scottish General in sunder; and sent his soul, to answer its last great account! No sooner did our hero see his adversary fall, than raising his sword, “Clarence,” cried he, “thou art revenged; nor have I ignobly stained de Clifford’s sword.”

The breathless body of his fallen, but valorous foe now attracted his regard: it drew a sigh from the humane breast of Edgar.—

The words of Salisbury came across his memory: "and was mine the right," cried he, "of separating, from its body, the soul of this brave soldier? Alas! perhaps this arm has widowed some fair, and noble dame: some hapless Elfrida soon will mourn her slaughtered Lord.—But for me, she might still have been blessed in his arms; and the world, perhaps, have boasted a Buchan.—Wherefore did Heaven select me, to be the shedder of his blood?" He paused—"But he was the enemy of my country: and I had vowed."——

His arm now grew extremely painful; when, sending a soldier to Lord Salisbury, with the account of the General's death, he retired to his tent, to have his wound examined.

When the afflicting news reached the ears of Douglas, that his son was slain, *then*, with a desperate valor, he determined to revenge, or not survive him. Pushing, there-

fore, amid the hottest part of the battle, in hopes to meet de Montford, he was engaged by Salisbury, and slain by that brave General.

The rash and indiscreet Lord of Narbonne, with several of his adherents, soon fell a sacrifice to their imprudence; and a total overthrow now ensued to the enemy, who, deprived of their leaders, fought at random, and were routed with great slaughter.

This victory, however fortunate, cost the Regent dear; as several officers of distinction, and seventeen hundred of his best men, were killed. On the side of the enemy, five thousand Scots and French were left dead on the field of battle; and numbers wounded, and taken prisoners.

The following day, the Regent invested Verneuil; which surrendered on capitulation.

De Montford, with his chosen band, found all the enemy's baggage, together with the money intended for the payment of the soldiers; and meeting with the corpse of the Viscount of Narbonne, they hung it upon a gibbet, from the contempt they felt for his crimes.

Edgar presented his rich prize to the Regent; which was by him graciously received; and a considerable portion was returned, by his Highness, to the youth, as a reward for his signal service. De Montford was retiring; when the Duke calling him back; "advance young man," said he, "and receive, as a reward due to your merit, the honour of being made a Knight Banneret. With admiration I have surveyed the uncommon bravery, you this day displayed; and which now publicly demands the thanks of Bedford."

Edgar, with a becoming modesty, received the praise, bestowed upon him by

the Regent; and, bending one knee to the ground, received the reward, he so highly merited, by his valor. The additional ceremony having passed, of cutting off the point of his standard, and making it a banner for his arms; he was saluted, by all around, with the title of *Sir Edgar de Montford*. The Duke, also, appointed him to a very great command. These honours, however flattering, affected not the mind of de Montford; who still preserved those unassuming, though dignified manners, which before so eminently distinguished him.—The large portion of the prize, which the Duke allotted to him, he generously divided with his companions in danger.

CHAP. XII.

SUPERIOR merit never fails of exciting the envy of narrow minds. So it was with Sir Edgar.—And the rewards, and distinctions, he so bravely merited, sunk deep into the rancorous heart of a young soldier of fortune, named Sir Hugh Fitzosborn; who tried every method, to lessen him in the eyes of the officers, by recounting the misfortune of his birth, and the obligations he owed to the Lord de Clifford.

This young Knight was nearly allied to the house of Mortagne, through means of

his mother, who was Sister to the Earl of Mortagne's first Lady. Learning from his kinsman, the Lord Graham, every particular respecting the youth, he took a malignant pleasure in relating what, he hoped, would prove the means of lowering the consequence of this proud upstart, as he frequently would stile him.

This malice, however, only succeeded with those young men, whose sole claim to notice was their birth; and who were glad to bring our hero upon a level with themselves, by opposing an adventitious circumstance, in their favour, to real merit. In vain did he try every effort, to injure him in the eyes of the General; who attributed his dislike to envy of that youth's superior qualities, and seldom or never listened to the malefic inventions to his prejudice, as every action of de Montford evinced their falsity. Sir Edgar was adored by the soldiery; whom he treated with an affability, and condescension, peculiar to himself.

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During his confinement, from the wound in his arm, Lord Salisbury frequently visited his tent; and daily found occasions to admire his patience, under extreme pain; his confidence in his Creator; and the gratitude he shewed, for every attention bestowed upon him.

The image of his adored Elfrida was never absent from his breast. For her he wished to live, that he might evince his attachment to her, by actions that would intitle him to her favour, and do honour to his generous Benefactor's preference of him.— The attentions paid him by the noble Salisbury, created in his heart the most lively emotions of gratitude, and affection: and he looked upon that Nobleman, as a second Benefactor.

By the most studious attention to his slightest wishes, as he grew better, did he try to shew the grateful sense he had, of his General's goodness to him: and under the aus-

pices of that great commander, who spared no pains with his pupil, he became a complete warrior.

How much did the continual praises, bestowed on de Montford, sicken the heart of Sir Hugh ! who, ever watchful of an opportunity of injuring our hero, now had the high gratification afforded him, to conceive, that he could expose the baseness, and hypocrisy, of the object of his detestation, before the whole army.

At this period, arrived the second son of the Lord Mortagne, Mr. Alfred Graham: a youth, of whose pleasing and amiable manners, de Montford had often heard the most favorable accounts.

A few short lines of congratulation were brought him, by the messenger that accompanied Mr. Graham, from Elfrida, and one from Father Anthony. It may well be supposed, that these tokens of being remembered
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by the two persons, on earth, most dear to him, gave the youth the most heartfelt satisfaction.

Pleasing himself, also, with the thought, that, in young Graham, he should find a friend, with whom, as being a relation, he might freely converse, on the subject nearest his heart; his having, besides, lately seen Elfrida, and inhabited the same mansion that contained her, all contributed to heighten his impatience, to become acquainted with him.—Willing, also, to shew every mark of respect to the family of her he loved, he embraced the earliest opportunity of waiting on the young gentleman.

He found him in his tent, and Sir Hugh Fitzosborn with him. With the most petrifying coldness, he received de Montford's warm congratulations, on his arrival; and scarcely deigned to answer the anxious, though guarded inquiries, made by him, after his fair Cousin.

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Mortified,

Mortified, and surpris'd, to meet with manners, so little correspondent with what he had reason to expect, both from report, and from the amiable countenance of young Graham, our hero retired, vexed and chagrined, at his disappointment.

No sooner had he withdrawn, than Fitzosborn, who, from his situation in the army, had free access to the General's tent, with impatient haste, sought Lord Salisbury; fraught with the hope, that he now could ruin de Montford, in the friendship and esteem of his patron. Having entered, and prefaced his intelligence, by some expressions of pity for those who unworthily placed their friendships, he proceeded to inform Lord Salisbury, that (however painful it was for him to assert it) de Montford was no longer worthy of his Lordship's farther countenance.

The face of the General exhibited marks of astonishment, and anger, at this charge
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against his favorite. "What, Sir," exclaimed he to Fitzosborn, "would you insinuate against de Montford; of whose worth I have had convincing proofs?" "That Sir Edgar is brave, my Lord," replied the wily Knight, "I acknowledge; and possesses, to appearance, many other valuable qualities.—But Heaven alone," continued he, "can read the heart of man.—You, my Lord, have been deceived.—Alas! my kinsman little knew the vileness of the man, he fostered in his bosom, or never would he have countenanced such a specious hypocrite." "Inform me, Sir," cried Salisbury indignantly, "to what all this leads.—If you have ought to advance against the character of de Montford, declare it boldly.—He will, I doubt not, defend himself: and, if innocent, Salisbury, be assured, shall see justice done to his accusers." "My Lord," replied Sir Hugh, "I have proofs that will convince you, that what I have advanced is true; but I submit to abide by your decision." Lord Salisbury grew disturbed. "Can Sir Ed-

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gar be base, or unworthy?" cried he, "No, it is impossible: guilt never could inhabit a soul like his.—I wrong him, for a moment, to suspect him guilty.—But proceed, Sir, with your charges:—I will hear you with patience.—But remember, should I find, you have abused the ear of Salisbury, with tales dictated alone by malice, a severe punishment shall be your doom.

Fitzosborn, unmoved at this threat, proceeded to inform the Earl, that, of late, he had observed de Montford, frequently steal from his tent, with a seeming dread of being discovered, intimated in his countenance.—That, his curiosity being excited, he had watched to whom these secret visits were paid; and had, at length, discovered, that they were made to one of the wives of the French prisoners; who was admired, throughout the camp, for her extraordinary beauty, and apparent modesty.—That, willing to have farther proof of his crime, before he exposed him, he had stole unperceived behind

hind the tent of the fair Gertrude, and, listening with attention, had overheard her exclaim; "Sure you are an Angel, sent from Heaven to my assistance.—Blessed be the day, that first I saw Sir Edgar de Montford! To your generosity, and humanity, I am indebted, for all I hold most dear."

"These words," continued Fitzosborn, "were a full confirmation to me of his guilt: and I soon after left the spot, where I had heard them, filled with abhorrence at a character, which added the most consummate duplicity, to crimes the most atrocious, determining, henceforth, to shun the base seducer's company. The friendship and favor, your Lordship has been pleased to shew me, induced my acquainting you with the real character of him, who has wound himself into your esteem, by his seeming virtues."

The Earl crossed himself, with emotion, at this intelligence of the thorough defalcation

tion of principle, in his favorite. "Unworthy youth," cried he with indignation; "No more shall Salisbury hold converse with such a villain.—Degenerate wretch! to seduce a captive's wife! I could have forgiven any fault but this."

Sir Hugh now retired, to spread the account of de Montford's disgrace with the General, and to write the whole of the circumstance to his friend, Lord Graham.

He left the Earl (who had conceived the most exalted opinion of the virtue of his charge) under the strongest anxiety, at the disappointment of his expectations; and under too much agitation of mind, to mark the malignant joy that lighted up the countenance of Fitzosborn, as he left him.

As de Montford generally visited his tent in the evenings, he at first determined to forbid his usual attendance, as finding himself indisposed:—But reflecting, besides this excuse

cuse being a falsehood, (which the high soul of Salisbury disdained) that it would bring the youth, regardless of his orders; this thought awakened, in his breast, every tender sentiment for our hero; whose many amiable qualities forced themselves to his memory, notwithstanding the anger he felt against him. His extreme piety, his excessive gratitude to his Benefactors, the greatness of soul, which he had often, with admiration marked, and which seemed to disdain all unworthy or base pursuits, crowded upon his mind. "And could he," exclaimed the Earl, "descend so low, as to seduce a prisoner's wife! Frail, frail humanity! These shining qualities, then, are but the semblances of virtue; and serve as a gloss, to cover a heart, deformed by its own depravity.— Yet will I hear what he has to say, in justification of himself. Perhaps, (yet no) can such a crime be justified, or extenuated?"— After deliberating, some time, what methods to pursue, and, if possible, to reclaim his fallen favorite, (though he was resolute
never

never to receive him upon his former footing) he sent the youth a few lines, intimating that he wished not for his visits that evening: that early on the morrow, he should expect to see him.

Long did the night appear to Salisbury, and equally so did it seem to de Montford; who felt hurt, and confounded, at the unusual coldness of Lord Salisbury's note to him; his prohibition of his company, without having assigned a cause. Being totally unconscious of having excited the envy, or dislike, of any, he could not conceive the Earl's difference of treatment, to have proceeded from the malevolence of an enemy.

Scarce had the morn appeared, when de Montford, impatient to have his doubts cleared, arose, and presented himself at the tent of Salisbury; who, too anxious to take his wonted repose, was up and dressed, when the youth entered his chamber.

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The solemn gravity, with which the Earl returned his salutation, announced to him, the change, that had taken place, in his Lordship's sentiments towards him. The conscious integrity of his own heart alone could have supported him, under the shock it gave him."

"I sent for you, Sir," cried the Earl, with a severe and penetrating look. "Ah my Lord!" (exclaimed de Montford interrupting him, and casting himself at his feet) "why this coldness, and severity, to one who would lay down his life for your service? Tell me, my Lord, I beseech you, what is my offence: in what can I have been so unfortunate, so ungrateful, as to have offended Lord Salisbury; to whose kind patronage I owe what I am?" "Rise, Sir;" (cried Salisbury, stifling the softness which was fast gathering round his heart, and assuming a severe demeanour) "this posture would better become you, before that God whom you have offended, than to me." "My Lord?" said de

de Montford, hastily rising, astonished, and doubting what he had heard. "The seducer of female innocence, I mean," said the Earl indignantly; "and that specious look of innocence but ill becomes the perpetrator of the vilest crimes." "What mean you, my Lord?" exclaimed the youth, with an air of affronted innocence. "How has de Montford merited, from the lips of Salisbury, such opprobrious epithets? O that your Lordship would name to me the accuser of my honour; that with this sword, I might chastise my base defamer!" "The blood of your accuser, de Montford," said the Earl reproachfully, "would not, I fancy, young man, revenge the wrongs of Gertrude's injured husband."

A crimson glow now dyed the cheeks of our hero.—He was evidently confused; and Salisbury, who had attentively watched every change in de Montford's countenance, now read (as he thought) his guilt, in the varied colour of his visage.

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The Earl deeply sighed. "I see," cried he, "that I have not wronged the innocent. O Heavens! that I could have found you guiltless!" "Favor me, my Lord," said the youth, (an indignant blush overspreading his fine face) "with some proof of the crime, you have been pleased to accuse me of; that I may detect the falsehood of my accuser." "Young man," cried the Earl, with angry impatience, "Salisbury does not give his credit to the inventions that malice alone dictates: your accuser is a man of birth; he is more, he is a man of undoubted honour.—He has received too certain proof of the defalcation of your's, for the truth of which he offered to pledge his life.—But I unnecessarily detain you, Sir; and will no longer, than to inform you what I have heard, respecting your conduct."

Sir Edgar undaunted, with an air of intrepidity, prepared to hear the General's charge against him: and the Earl proceeded to relate, what Fitzosborn had informed him,

to his confused though indignant auditor ; who frequently, during the recital, blessed himself with astonishment.

“Is this the whole, my Lord ?” exclaimed de Montford, when the Earl had ceased speaking ; “as I flatter myself, of this I can exculpate myself.” “It is the whole, de Montford,” returned Salisbury ; joy illuminating his fine countenance, at the thought of de Montford’s innocence.” “And can you, then, deny your having nightly visited the tent of Gertrude ?” “I cannot, my Lord,” replied he ; “but Heaven knows, with what innocence.” The countenance of the Earl fell. Then, casting on the youth a look of severe reproach ; “and darest thou, young man, appeal to the most High, in behalf of thy virtue, when thy own words condemn thee ? Leave me, Sir,” proceeded Salisbury, waving his hand, for Sir Edgar to withdraw : “The presence of such hypocrites is hateful to me.”

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The blood rushed to the cheek of our hero; and his whole frame seemed to partake of the emotion, these words gave rise to. "Forgive me, my Lord," cried he, (assuming an air of dignity, and spirit, that surprised the General) "if I this once disobey your orders: nor can I leave your presence, till I have convinced your Lordship, that you have judged too hastily, when you could suppose the soul of de Montford, capable of committing a base or unworthy action.—And know, my Lord," continued he with modest firmness, "that, highly as I prize your Lordship's favor, never will I purchase it by falsehood or deceit.—No violator am I, my Lord, of female honour; but am, and ever will be, the guardian and respecter of it: and if the rescuing of oppressed innocence, is a crime in Lord Salisbury's eyes, I own myself that offender." "De Montford," replied the Earl, "I thought you had better known the soul of Salisbury, than to harbour such a doubt.—Happy shall I be to find you blameless.—

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To find myself deceived." "Forgive my petulance, my Lord," returned the youth, "and attribute it to the concern I feel, at having lost your Lordship's confidence, through the misrepresentations of an action, which your Lordship must approve." "You have not lost it, de Montford," replied the General: "I feel your innocence.—But I am impatient to hear your account of this mysterious affair; which, I am now persuaded, will redound to your honour."—"How far I am guilty of the crimes I am charged with," said de Montford, "your Lordship shall presently judge."

"Returning late, one evening, from a ride round the environs of our camp, I was tempted, by the fineness of it, to prolong my ride: and, striking through the wood, which leads immediately to Verneuil, my ears were pierced by female cries. Presently the sounds grew fainter, and at last died away.—Vainly I tried, by my eyes, to discover, from what quarter they proceeded: but

but pursuing it, as well as I could guess, I at length heard some murmuring noise. I instantly directed my course to that part, from whence the sounds had proceeded; and, giving the spur to Bucephalus, I quickly surmounted the obstacles, which continually impeded my way.—Darting, like lightning through the briars, bogs, and fens, with which that wood abounds, the distant sounds of horse's hoofs I now could hear distinctly; but the cries were suppressed.—I concluded some base ravisher had stopped the mouth of the hapless victim of their power.—Redoubling my speed, I soon cleared the wood, and found myself upon an open plain; and could clearly distinguish, though at a considerable distance, some men on horseback, riding most furiously. At length I reached them.—One of them held fast upon his steed a female, half fainting with terror.—Her mouth was stopped, by a handkerchief, to stifle her cries.—Riding up to the ravisher, I forced him to halt; and demanded, by what authority he thus committed violence on a

helpless female, who was already deprived of sense, by his cruelty.—The man returned some insolent reply; and I was preparing to punish him: when the woman, finding her persecutor engaged, had forced the handkerchief from her mouth. ‘Save,’ cried she wildly, ‘save me, generous stranger, from the hands of this inhuman ruffian.’—The other man now had joined his associate. ‘Chastize,’ said the first, ‘the insolence of this stranger.’ The Caitiff drew his hanger, with an intention to obey; and made a cut at the arm, which held my sabre: but the moon, at that instant reflecting its rays on the steel, the brightness dazzled the eyes of my opponent’s horse; who starting reared, and threw his rider; who lay, to appearance, senseless on the ground.—The other, seeing me engaged, attempted to save himself, and his prey, by flight: but soon I overtook him; and, throwing myself from my horse, I caught the bridle of his, with one hand, whilst with the other I warded off the blows, he made at me with his hanger.

Being

Being now necessitated to let go his hold of the woman, (who, finding herself free, jumped from the horse, and fled, as fast as her strength would permit her) in attempting to sever the arm which held the reins of his horse, I wrenched the weapon from his hand; and, seizing him in my arms, I hurled him to the ground; and, pointing my sabre to his breast, I vowed to finish his existence, did he not confess the whole extent of the crimes he had committed against the unfortunate creature, I had rescued from his power. Terrified, and apprehensive of my executing my threatened vengeance, he entreated my pity, by solemnly protesting, he had only acted by the direction of another. 'Name,' cried I, 'then, the instigator of a crime so atrocious.' Hesitating, he pronounced a name, that shocked, and concerned me."

"Excuse me, my Lord," cried de Montford, breaking off the narrative of his discourse, "if I conceal it:—In exculpating myself,

myself, I wish not to expose the vices of others."

The Earl was affected: but, restraining his sensations, being unwilling to interrupt him, the youth continued his story. "The man, proceeded de Montford, "informed me, that his Lord, meeting with the young woman, who unattended was making towards the camp, had stopped his horse, to examine her; and being extremely struck with her youth and beauty, made some proposals, which she rejected, with scorn and disdain.—Provoked at her contempt, and fired by her beauty, 'he ordered me, noble Sir,' continued the man, 'to seize her, and convey her to his tent.—The unhappy girl threw herself upon her knees, and besought his pity.—She declared herself to be the wife of one of the Scottish prisoners: that, upon the news of their defeat, she had left her native country, selling every thing she was possessed of, in order, if possible, to procure her husband's liberty.—That the chief

part

part of the way she had travelled on foot.—It was in vain, however, she sued for mercy. Her tears, and distress, added to her charms; and made my Lord more eager to secure his prize.—He forced her himself upon my horse.—Then, turning to Bertrand and me, who could scarcely bear to hear the poor young woman's lamentations, he charged us, as we valued our lives, to secure his prize.—Then, riding on with swiftness, to be ready to receive her, we were proceeding, according to our orders, when you, Sir, stopped us.—I own,' continued the man, 'my heart smote me, as I was obliged to stifle the cries of the unfortunate girl:—But I argued to myself, that there was little likelihood of her being able to ransom her husband: and, withal, knowing my Lord to be extremely generous, and that she might fall into worse hands, I partly reconciled myself to being a partaker of his crimes.—Besides, always having been used to obey our young Lord, Bertrand and myself knew not, without the ruin both of our family and selves, how to

disobey him; we being,' added he, ' sons of one of my Lord's tenants.—But, though it will be a bad day's work for my brother, and me, by reason of your interference; yet, believe me, Sir, I am heartily rejoiced to be rid of such a bad business.' ' You have reason, indeed,' replied I, " as well as your Lord, to be thankful, that you have not contributed to, or he perpetrated the worst of crimes. And if I find, that what you have told me, is true, and that neither of you have offered farther violence to this young woman, than what you have confessed, I will protect you from the vengeance of your Lord; and neither of you shall want.'—“ Leaving him I reached the fair sufferer; who, too terrified, and faint, to effectuate her meditated escape, had fallen not many yards from her vanquished foe.

“ Pale and trembling, she strove to express her gratitude, for the service I had rendered her.—Whilst I raised her from the ground, I comforted her with assurances of
having

having a protector in me, till she could find her husband; whom to discover, upon my return to the camp, should be my first care. I found from her, that the man had not deceived me; and, therefore, gave them permission to stay with my servants, till they should be restored to their Lord's favor.—Wrapping her in one of the horsemen's coats, to avoid observation, I would have placed her on my horse; but she preferred proceeding on foot.—We had the good fortune to arrive at the camp, without being observed. Almost immediately after my arrival, I sought out, amongst the prisoners, the husband of the fair and virtuous Gertrude; and had the satisfaction of procuring his liberty, for an hour.—I cannot describe to your Lordship the joy, the transports, of the pair at meeting.

“ Without regarding mine, or the presence of the guard that attended, she flew into the arms of her husband. ‘ Ah! Heavens can it be my Gertrude, that I enfold?’

L 4

cried

cried the Soldier, gazing upon her in rapturous joy : ‘ and didst thou leave thy friends, thy country, for thy Mc. Pherfon ? ’

“ The hour soon arrived, that must part the affectionate pair : when, first consoling Gertrude, with the promise of soon procuring her husband’s liberation, I comforted Mc. Pherfon with assurances, that I would obtain his wife a tent to herself, till she could be with him ; and, by these means, I made the separation more supportable to both :

“ The Regent, however, as your Lordship knows, till within these two days, has been viewing the country : and it was only the evening before yesterday, that I presented a petition from Gertrude, enforced by an earnest request of my own, to allow her the privilege of being with her husband.—That amiable Prince immediately granted my request ; and, in consideration of her faithfulness, and merit, upon which I had much enlarged, he ordered Mc. Pherfon’s apartment

ment to be separated from the other prisoners. Your Lordship may conceive the joy of Gertrude, when I informed her of the Regent's goodness.—It was her ingenuous, and passionate expressions of gratitude, that were overheard; and, by the malice of my enemy, turned so much to my dishonour; which has robbed me of my General's confidence. But, by an inquiry into the truth of what I have had the honour to relate to your Lordship, I shall hope to be again restored to that favor I have forfeited."

De Montford ceased; and, retiring a few paces backwards, he modestly awaited the General's approval of his conduct.

"You are restored already," cried Salisbury, much affected: "Come to my arms, thou noble generous youth, if you can forgive my suspecting such high worth as you possess.—But, believe me, de Montford, Salisbury suffered as much, from the idea of your unworthiness, as you could, at having

occasioned his displeasure.—Say, my brave and amiable charge, can you forgive my having wronged you, as I have done?”

“ Ah my Lord !” exclaimed de Montford, “ do not descend so far from your dignity, as to ask forgiveness from such a poor youth as I.—We are all subject to being deceived.—I laid myself open to censure, from my fears of the reputation of my fair charge suffering from my visits ; and, therefore, imprudently enough, as the event has proved, chose the evening, to avoid observation.—As some compensation, however, for the pain I have suffered from your Lordship’s displeasure, name to me, I beseech you, the base asperfer of my fame.”

The Earl however, apprehensive of the consequences of giving up his author, notwithstanding the youth’s most urgent entreaties, refused his request.

“ I

“ I wish to know, de Montford,” cried Salisbury, desirous of changing the subject, “ if you have seen that base young man, who, in open violation of all laws, would have, but for your timely interposition, committed the most atrocious act of oppression, on a beautiful and amiable female ; whose sufferings, and virtue, have so highly interested me in her favour, that I wish to be a partaker with you, in the purest and most lasting of all joys, that resulting from assisting distressed merit.

“ I am happy, my Lord,” replied de Montford, “ not only in having regained your confidence, upon my bare assertion, without requiring proofs, or witnesses, of the innocence of my conduct ; but in having secured to a worthy pair your Lordship’s favor, and protection. But you demanded to know, if I had seen the base ravisher of the fair Gertrude.—I have, my Lord.—Fearful of his making future attempts upon her virtue, I wished him to know, she had found a protector,

L 6

teetor, in one who would risk his life, to preserve the honour of a defenceless female.

“Early the next morning, therefore, I waited on him. I am not entirely unknown,” continued de Montford, “to that young Nobleman; and, therefore, needed not the ceremony of sending my name, before I was admitted to his presence. I found him in a fit of sullen resentment, at his yesterday’s disappointment; but, shaking off his ill humour, at the sight of me; ‘Sir Edgar de Montford,’ cried he, gaily advancing to take my hand, ‘to what cause am I indebted for this favour?’ “I drew back my hand, with undisguised contempt.” ‘I give not my hand, my Lord,’ said I, ‘to a man, who would, without remorse, have perpetrated a crime, that humanity blushes to name.’— ‘What mean you, Sir Edgar?’ exclaimed he, reddening with shame, and anger. As we were alone, without preface, I informed him, that I was the man he must look upon, as the rescuer of the fair Gertrude, and, till
I could

I could procure her husband's liberty, her protector: and, under that sacred title, I should certainly punish all future attempts upon her innocence. He heard me, (though I could perceive with difficulty) till I began to expostulate with him on the heinousness of the crime, which he was so fortunate, as to be prevented the commission of.—When, losing all patience; 'Is it not enough, then,' furiously cried he, 'that you must presume to interfere with my concerns, and pleasures? But, pluming yourself upon your better fortune, you dare to force on me the canting preachments of your ghostly Father Anthony? To your fair person,' sneeringly continued he, 'I suppose, Mc. Pherson's wife has been more kind. Curse on the hour which brought you to her rescue! By this time, she would not have thanked you for your impertinent interference.'

"I restrained my rising choler at his sarcasm, and made allowances for his vexation, and disappointment, added to the shame arising

arising from conscious guilt, when detected. I continued cool, and dispassionate, notwithstanding the bitter taunts and menaces, with which he loaded me, in order, as I well knew, to work up my anger; till he called me, (I blush at the recollection) he dared to call me, base-born coward!

“ Suffice it to say, my Lord, we fought; and I had the good fortune to conquer, and disarm my antagonist, without his having received a wound, of any great consequence. I insisted on his begging my pardon; and the proud young Noble was forced to comply.—Then, presenting his sword—‘ Take back your sword, my Lord,’ cried I; ‘ and when next you draw it, let it be in the cause of virtue; and you will prove more victorious.—The crime, and not your defeat, alone demands your blushes.—What has passed, however, shall ever remain a secret, in the breast of de Montford.’

“ The haughty young Lord was softened. He seized my hand.—‘ You have used your
power

power nobly, Sir Edgar! - Forgive my insolence to you; and, by the deep abhorrence I feel at the crime, you have saved me from being guilty of, think me worthy of your friendship.—Mine I now offer you.’ ‘I accept it with pleasure, my Lord,’ returned I; ‘and rejoice to see, that a proper sense of honour actuates you, when thus you seek the friendship of a man, who has rendered abortive your views, when incompatible with honour.’ “Thus finished the affair, after my having, as a proof of his reconciliation to virtue, demanded the entire forgiveness of his two domestics; and an offer of his own to purchase the freedom of Mc. Pherson, could it be procured.

“And now my Lord, I have your forgiveness to ask, for having been led, by the warmth of my disposition, to a private combat; when this life alone should be endangered in my country’s cause, or in the defence of virtue.”

“You

“You have behaved most nobly throughout, in this affair,” said the Earl, “and have little cause to fear my censure.—And now, leave me to punish the defamer of your honour; the account which tells so greatly towards it, will sufficiently punish your accuser, if malice alone prompted his discovering it to me.—But, if, like me, he has been deceived, if you cannot forgive him, I shall conclude, I have still my peace to make with de Montford.”

“Oh! my Lord,” exclaimed the youth, kissing the hand of the General, “what an argument you have brought, to induce my forgiveness! I withhold it no longer; and leave the vindication of my honour solely to your Lordship.—But oblige me, by inquiring into the truth of what I have told you.” “I promise you I will,” replied Salisbury. And de Montford, presently after, withdrawing, the General took the trouble of sending for Mc. Pherson’s wife; who not only bore testimony

testimony to what the youth had advanced; but in the most partial praise, that gratitude could dictate, she mentioned, what her preserver had omitted, that he had presented a handsome sum to her husband, upon their first meeting, in order to procure her the conveniences she wanted.—Tears of gratitude forced themselves to her eyes, as she finished; and Lord Salisbury, doubly pleased at this confirmation of his charge's virtue, and witnessing the undissembled gratitude of the fair cause of so much trouble, dismissed her with marks of his bounty, and a promise of future favour.—Then, sending for Sir Hugh, he, to the severe mortification of that Knight, related the whole affair; concluding with passing the highest encomiums on de Montford's conduct.

Seeing the confused and disappointed Fitzosborn about to offer excuses, for his accusation of Sir Edgar, the General stopped him, with these words: “I had before declared to you, Sir Hugh, my intention of
punishing

punishing you, should I find your account of de Montford's dishonour untrue.—Strict justice, therefore, should make me confront you with that noble youth; whose injured honour calls for that reparation: but the wish of Salisbury is, to preserve harmony throughout the camp.—Nor am I willing to suppose, that Malice could have been your motive.—It is not for me to pass a judgment on you, when, like you, I suffered myself to be deceived:—Go, Sir; and never let appearances again deceive you.”

Fitzosborn retired, overwhelmed with confusion, and anger. But what most galled his malignant heart was, to find de Montford, more than ever, secured, by his means, in the affection and good opinion of the General.

Elated on his first discovery of de Montford's supposed seduction of the beautiful Gertrude, he had written a full account of the whole affair to his friend Lord Graham; who had requested the Knight to keep a watchful

watchful eye over the conduct of that youth; enlarging on those parts, which tended to prove his infamy.

Lord Salisbury, fearful of de Montford's discovering his accuser, the morning following, sent off a detachment of men, amongst whom he appointed Fitzosborn, and young Graham, to garrison one of the towns, they had lately captured,

CHAP. XIII.

THE Regent, finding his presence necessary in England, left the army under the conduct of Salisbury; who, at his
own

own expence, had raised a body of five thousand men.—The Earls Talbot and Suffolk were his principal Generals: and, immediately after the departure of Bedford, he called a council of war, and proposed laying siege to Orleans. The Chiefs approved the determination; and agreed to assist him, in the conquest of it. But, before a siege of such importance was to be made, Salisbury determined to reduce first the neighbouring town, and places around it. Three months, therefore, were spent in subduing those, which might impede their design.

Many were the opportunities, that our young Knight had, of displaying his courage, and securing, by his behaviour, the esteem and applause of Salisbury, and his Generals, who all sought the friendship of the youth.

At the expiration of the third month, the English army appeared before the gates of Orleans. That place was strongly defended by several brave Nobles, who had purposely guarded

guarded this town, to signalize their courage, and address; it being of the greatest consequence to the French King, who had no reason to complain of the garrison that defended it.

The different armies each day, both the assailants and besieged, performed miracles of valour. It was now that de Montford, for the second time, experienced the severe affliction of losing a noble patron, and the foldiers an able and beloved General.

The brave Earl of Salisbury had taken the tower of the bridge, which overlooked the whole town of Orleans; and, with de Montford, was standing at the window, observing the posture of the enemy; when a ball from their cannon (to the infinite grief and horror of Edgar) mortally wounded the General. Salisbury fell to the ground, ere the arm of our hero could afford him assistance. He threw himself by the side of the fallen Chief, whilst his countenance expressed the distraction

distraction of his mind—Ah! my Lord! my General! exclaimed he breathless with agitation. I fear—he stopped—then, gazing at the agonized visage of the dying Salisbury, his grief became too great for utterance.—He raised his beloved General in his arms; and supported his head on his breast, whilst one arm hung over his shoulder.—Then, loudly calling for assistance, the Earl looked up.—“It is in vain, de Montford;” cried he, in a broken and tremulous voice; “all human aid is vain.—This is a final blow.—You will find, my amiable young friend, that Salisbury has not forgotten you.—Oh! my Constance! my beloved wife! how will thy gentle spirit bear this separation!—But it is not eternal. Go to her, de Montford; tell the angelic sufferer, that my last breath pronounced her loved name.—And now, all gracious Father,” cried the Earl, lifting up his eyes to Heaven, “pardon my errors, and receive my—” He stopped—he gasped for breath—and pressing the hand of de Montford, he expired.

Petrified

Petrified with grief, and horror, the youth remained, for some time motionless; still supporting, in his arms, his much-loved General: till at length the surrounding soldiery, by the command of Earl Talbot, forced him from the bleeding and breathless body of his gallant friend. But, breaking from their hold, he kneeling, took the hand of Salisbury, and pressed it, with strong emotion, to his lips.—He made an effort to speak, but his voice was choked by his feelings.—He covered his face, with both his hands, and groaned aloud!—

Scarcely could Lord Talbot, on whom now the chief command devolved, restrain the emotions of sorrow, that filled his heart, at the mournful spectacle before him: but, fearful of disheartening the dismayed soldiers, who now looked up to him as their leader, he checked the rising grief, that rose within him; and, advancing to de Montford, with an averted countenance, (as fearing to be unmanned, by the sight of Salisbury's mangled corpse)

corpse) he took his hand.—“ Sacred be your sorrow, gallant youth,” cried he; and what heart (looking around him) but participates in it! Yet, let us not shew the love we bore the gallant Chieftain, who now lies slain before us, in unavailing tears, and vain regrets; but by the glorious revenge we take, on those who have deprived us of so beloved, and courageous a commander.—Nor will I see the conqueror of Buchan, the chosen friend of Salisbury, neglect this opportunity of evincing to the world, the love he bore his memory.”

These words alone could have aroused de Montford, from the stupor his grief had plunged him into. They gave a turn to emotions, and awakened the most lively desire of revenging his General's death. Giving a last look at the breathless Chief, “ Oh! my friend! my General!” cried the afflicted youth, “ and shall I no more fight by thy victorious side? Shall no more your Edgar be fired with emulation, at beholding thy
2 great

great atchievements? Alas! no more shalt thou cause this breast to glow with delight, at thy approvals.—But I will avenge thy death; and the sword of de Clifford,” continued he, unsheathing it, “will aid my just revenge.”

The Earl of Talbot now took the chief command; and carried on the siege, with the greatest vigor. He placed de Montford (whom he looked upon as a youth, that promised to be one of the greatest Generals, England ever produced) next to Suffolk.

De Montford, like a lion deprived of his prey, sallied forth under the conduct of Talbot. Fury and destruction painted on his youthful visage, and as if inspired by the God of war, he performed miracles of valour. Where'er he fought numbers fell.—But, notwithstanding the skill and courage, which so eminently distinguished the British commanders, who laid siege to Orleans, Heaven, as if to punish England, for the injustice of

her cause, raised up for France, a female Champion, whose courage, skill, and prowess, notwithstanding her youth and sex, that rendered abortive every effort of the English troops to its destruction.

It was now that the famous Joan d'Arc appeared to the French Monarch; and, by her promises, and declaration, that she had received a Divine mission, cheered the heart, not only of Charles, but of the drooping soldiery; who, emboldened by her promises, placed themselves under her auspices.—Nor had they reason to repent their confidence: for, by her admirable courage and example, she inspired her soldiers with a degree of courage, and intrepidity, that amounted to enthusiasm; and they presently compelled the English to raise the siege!

She next, although she met with a severe opposition, took several neighbouring forts. Such a continuance of successes, owing to a female valor, disheartened the British soldiery;

diery; who, notwithstanding every argument, and persuasion, offered by their leaders, would not be convinced, but that she acted in concert with the Devil: and such was their panic, that they were even afraid to encounter those troops, whom before they had so often beaten, and despised.

The Generals, finding that their troops refused to perform their duty, abandoned themselves to despair. The Earl of Suffolk, with four hundred men, were taken prisoners; and, to their still farther mortification, Charles was crowned at Rheims.

The French now recovered all their former provinces, and towns; and most of the English soldiers were cut to pieces, in the several actions.

Emboldened by such repeated successes, the French determined to conquer the remainder of the troops, under the immediate command of Talbot and his young Colleague;

M 2

who,

who, undaunted by their cruel turn of fortune, had still maintained their ground.—The invincible Joan, fell upon them so suddenly, that they had scarce time to form themselves, to meet their assailants' fury.

The enemy soon charged, and great part of Talbot's men, not being prepared, and taken by surprise, fled with panic and consternation, and without making the smallest resistance. Shame and grief seized the soul of Talbot.—“Are these, Sir Edgar,” cried he, “our British soldiers, whom once I thought invincible? Are these the gallant men, whom Salisbury and myself so often have seen, covered with the blood of France, that are now to be overcome by the nerveless arm of a poor weak maid? Shame on my countrymen!—Oh Heaven! That I should live to despise them! Talbot now has lived too long.”

He now, with de Montford, addressed the remainder; and exhorted them to shew themselves

themselves Britons. Fired by their reproaches, and shamed by their companion's flight, willing also to convince their Generals of their attachment, the hardy few fought, with a valour and intrepidity surprising; and, for some time, they equally maintained the battle.

Many hours did the action remain doubtful: till at length, more troops coming to the relief of the enemy, overpowered by numbers, they fell, evincing to the last their courage and valour.—Two thousand English were left dead upon the field; and Talbot, with several of his principal officers, were taken prisoners.

De Montford, covered with wounds, had the good fortune to escape the general carnage; and, by means of a thick wood, which grew near the field of battle, he effectuated his retreat.

It was early on this inauspicious morn, when one of the Regent's messengers, who had arrived, with orders from that Prince to Lord Talbot, brought him a letter; the superscription of which he knew to be the hand writing of Elfrida.—With eager impatience he was tearing open this letter, when the drum beat to arms.

The gratification of his feelings was ever a secondary consideration with our hero, when duty was in the way.—Alarmed at this hasty summons, he deposited the beloved lines in his bosom; and, girding on his well tried sword, he hastened to the field. No sooner had de Montford secured a place of safety, than, filled with the pleasing hope, that he was in possession of that, which would greatly compensate for the toils and misfortunes of the day, he drew the letter from his bosom; and hastily breaking it open, he read these lines:

“ I

“ I once thought you virtuous, and loved you.—I have been deceived; and pray that all other sentiments may quickly be erased from this bosom, but those of the most sincere wishes, that you may be as happy as you deserve: which is all you can expect, or hope now from

ELFRIDA DE CLIFFORD.”

Never was distraction equal to de Montford's, on reading these cruel lines.—At first he thought his eyes had deceived him; that he was in a dream.—Again he read the letter, so fatal to his peace; and again he was thrown into the most bitter agonies, by the contents. He tore his hair, and committed a thousand extravagances; imprecating the vengeance of Heaven on those who had deceived her.

At length, his spirits exhausted by the violence of his transports, and faint with the anguish his wounds excited, he became more calm.—He threw himself, quite overcome, on the ground; and burst into tears.—“ Oh!

my Elfrida!" cried the youth, "Is this the reward I meet with, after enduring the pains of absence, and the toils of war? Weak is that wretch, who places his happiness on woman's smiles! Wherefore did I divulge my fatal passion to her? Why did I not sooner struggle with the devouring flame, till it consumed me, than trust it to the dear betrayer of my peace? Then had I not been buoyed up with the flattering hope, that I was beloved, with a flame as ardent, and sincere as my own: that time nor absence would abate her passion.—Then, not having raised my hopes so high, I should not have felt the pangs, which now distract me. Oh! my Elfrida! my affianced wife! is this thy confidence in de Montford?"

"Curse on that wretch," (continued he, furiously rising) "who has lessened it.—Who, perhaps, has everlastingly seduced thee from me!—But no; Elfrida de Clifford would not give herself away, till she has seen him, to whom she pledged herself."

The

The affair of Mc. Pherson's wife presented itself to his imagination. "It must be that," exclaimed he, "which has been, through the insidious arts of an enemy, thus represented to her.—She thinks me false to love and honour, an apostate to virtue.—Ah! that, in performing the duties of humanity, my peace, my fame, should be destroyed! Would that Salisbury had let me have fought the miscreant, that dared to asperse it! But I repent me not the rescue of that poor wretch, by means of whom I am bereaved of love. I feel myself," (cried de Montford, placing his right hand on his heart) "I feel myself more worthy of her, by that action: and if there is one latent spark of love remaining in that gentle bosom, for de Montford, and thou art not yet lost for ever to him; how will it be awakened, when, on my return to my native shores, I shall relate the circumstance! Will not thy generous heart bleed, at the pangs thou hast caused thy unhappy lover? Yes, thy noble nature will be impatient to requite the wrongs, thou has done
thy

thy Edgar.—And I yet may hope to be blessed with love, and with Elfrida.”

Revived by this thought, he pursued his way, in the hope of soon meeting with some hut, to repose his wearied limbs, and to get his wounds dressed, by its charitable inhabitant.

The night now advanced apace, and scarcely could he distinguish the intricate windings of the wood, through which he had made his escape. The moon, now and then, gave a faint uncertain light: then, suddenly immersing behind a dark cloud, left him to pursue his way, amid the gloomy horrors, which surrounded him. Weak and faint from the great effusion of blood, which, notwithstanding his endeavours to staunch it with his sash, still flowed from his wounds, scarce could he summon strength sufficient, to continue his weary journey.

The toll of a distant bell revived his almost exhausted courage, and made him, with quickened

quicken'd steps, hasten to that quarter, whence the animating sound proceeded.— Now striking to the left, after surmounting many obstacles, which continually impeded his way, he gained the end of the wood; and could distinguish plainly a light, which slowly seem'd to advance, to meet his hastening step. Our hero now was within a very few paces of the friendly light, when his foot caught some brambles, and loose stones.— He fell to the ground.—The shock, and force of the fall, made his wounds bleed with violence. Faint, and exhausted before, he now felt a cold chill, and faintness, pervade his whole frame.—Death seem'd to hover before his eyes: and his wounds at the same time, giving him a sudden pang, he uttered a groan of anguish, and sunk into total insensibility!

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